



RACISM BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

Asians in Yorkshire on how racism scars their lives
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VITAL STRIKE SET TO HIT UNIVERSITIES

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NHS CRISIS, DRIVING UP RACISM, SOCIAL CARE ATTACK, PAY CUTS

DUMP

THIS

PIG

BORIS Johnson's crimes are much greater than his 'Peppa Pig' speech to bosses this week



TIME TO DRIVE OUT JOHNSON

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RACISM



Hateful home secretary Priti Patel

New attacks to scapegoat refugees

by SAM ORD

THE TORIES are in trouble and fear their support is slipping.

So they are trying to scapegoat desperate people crossing the Channel.

Incredibly, home secretary Priti Patel, who has unveiled a string of the most vicious measures already, is regarded by Boris Johnson and many Tory MPs as too soft.

Patel will try to show she is as racist and murderous as anyone. She will bring forward more plans for "push back" migrants—code for using deaths as a deterrent.

The government says it will learn from Greek camps. There migrants are put under strict curfews, face checks on their movements and have their claims rejected if they don't follow harsh rules.

Destruction

The government already treats asylum seekers brutally. People who have come from war, torture, extreme poverty and climate destruction are regarded as scroungers and liars. They are meant to live on under £5.50 a day and can't work.

Now a government taskforce is set to demand cutting benefits further, forcing refugees into army barracks and "offshoring" people to distant countries.

It's a foul campaign that is out to divide us. We need to unite to say refugees and migrants are welcome here—and drive out the Tories.

>>More on pages 4&5



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'I think there are people that quite like getting the extra £20 but maybe they don't need it'

Tory MP Andrew Rosindell on Universal Credit

'We have to be careful. We're dealing with human beings who have families'

Tory MP Andrew Rosindell on a proposal to ban MPs having second jobs

"Cricket is not unique—it's the one that's been caught"

Former international rugby player Jason Robinson

'Far too many women are asking themselves if the police are on their side in tackling violence against them. And if they can trust us to help them'

Martin Hewitt, chairman of the National Police Chiefs' Council



Barclays bank boss nets £2.4 million bye bye bung

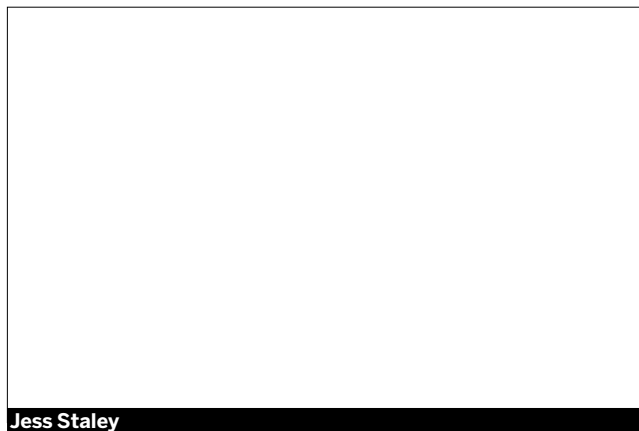
BARCLAYS BANK is under pressure over the £2.4 million it handed to departing chief executive Jess Staley.

He resigned recently following a probe into his past ties to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Staley intends to contest the preliminary conclusions of the UK regulatory investigation. This examined whether he had mischaracterised his relationship with Epstein as purely professional.

The full report by the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority has not yet been published.

The Financial Times newspaper has reported that when he worked at JPMorgan Chase several



Jess Staley

years ago, Staley exchanged 1,200 emails with Epstein over a four-year period, with content that included unexplained terms such as "snow white".

Epstein died in prison in

2019 while awaiting trial on charges that he sex-trafficked underage girls.

Staley visited Epstein while he was serving a prison sentence in Florida in 2009 for procuring a child for

prostitution and soliciting a prostitute.

A lawyer for Staley told the Financial Times last week that he "had no involvement in any of the alleged crimes committed by Mr Epstein, and code words were never used by Mr Staley in any communications with Mr Epstein, ever".

After he resigned, the Barclays board decided to allow Staley to retain £2.4 million in fixed pay and £120,000 pension entitlement for this year, as well as "repatriation costs to the US".

The board has made no decision on Staley's 2021 bonus.

He also owns 17.1 million Barclays shares, which at the current price are worth £33.5 million.

THE NUMBER of stop and searches carried out by police in England and Wales has risen by 24 percent to almost 700,000 in a single year. Cops used the tactic on the equivalent of one in five male minority ethnic teenagers. Use of the racist powers increased dramatically over the period covering lockdowns, rising to 695,009 instances, according to the Home Office.

It states that black, Asian and minority ethnic males aged 15-19 were searched 208 times for every 1,000 people. The proportion that resulted in an arrest fell from 13 percent to 11 percent.

On the increase

PARLIAMENT'S sleaze watchdog has ruled that Boris Johnson does not need to reveal the cost of his family holiday in a plush Marbella villa funded by the millionaire minister Zac Goldsmith. Kathryn Stone, the parliamentary standards commissioner, has decided that the freebie does not need to be declared in the MPs' register of interests.

Hancock's mates furniture firm made fortune off PPE

THE PROFITS of a small family furniture business in Nottingham rocketed by 4,700 percent after former health secretary Matt Hancock helped it land a £29 million government contract for PPE.

Monarch Acoustics Ltd is owned and run by husband-and-wife team Stuart and Sophie Hopkin.

It was given the contract to supply surgical gowns after being referred to the fast-track "VIP lane" by Hancock in May 2020.

Turnover leapt from £9.8 million in 2019 to £38 million in 2020. And

Stuart and Sophie Hopkin had no experience with surgical gowns

pre-tax profits ballooned from just £267,000 to a £12.6 million over the same period.

At the end of the 2019 financial year the firm, which has only 80 workers, had just £41,000 in the bank.

A year later that figure had grown to £10.2 million.

Hancock helped in the process of securing work for four separate firms, including Monarch.

Until the pandemic, Monarch—also known as Monarch Educational Furniture—does not appear to have any experience of PPE.

In the 2020 accounts lodged with Companies House, it is noted, "During the year the company had the opportunity to diversify, due to the Covid pandemic, which involved several different contracts utilising current suppliers.

This is the reason for the significant increase in turnover as shown above."

The Hopkins bought their home for £1.1 million in cash without the requirement for a mortgage in March this year.

Tax evasion losses could pay for global vaccination

COUNTRIES ARE losing almost half a trillion dollars through tax abuse by multinationals and the super-rich. That's enough to fully vaccinate the global population against Covid-19 three times over, a report has said.

Research by tax campaigners found that estimated losses had risen from £320 billion last year to £359 billion in 2021.

Britain alone is responsible for almost 40 percent of the total.

Britain facilitates abuse and evasion through a network made up of British overseas territories and the City of London, the report said. The State of Tax Justice



2021 said £230 billion of the total sum was the result of cross-border corporate tax abuse by multinational corporations and £128 billion offshore tax evasion by wealthy individuals.

Miroslav Palansky, a data scientist for the authors, said the figures represented "the tip of the iceberg" and that actual losses from tax abuse were much higher.

.... but its funding a boom in private jets

THE SUPER-rich have handed a boom to suppliers of private jets.

More than 4.2 million private jet flights have taken place this year, according to aviation data provider WingX, a record number.

In the first week of November they were up 54 percent on the same period last year, and up 16 percent on 2019. Flexjet's chief executive "pretty much spent the last nine months shopping for aircraft", said the fractional ownership company's European managing director Marine Eugene.

Demand is so high that Flexjet has stopped taking on new customers for its entry-level Jet Card programme.

So has NetJets, which has reported the highest demand for flying in its near 60-year history and is investing about £2.1 billion in 100 new aircraft.

One recent analysis found that a passenger travelling in a private aircraft emits around four to 15 times the emissions of an economy class air passenger. They emit between 75 and 250 times the CO2 of a comparable high-speed rail journey.

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Johnson's social care plans let the rich keep their cash

REMEMBER HOW Boris Johnson said he'd fixed social care? Well this week it became clear that he won't get close.

MPs passed a set of social care changes in the House of Commons on Monday evening that include an attack on ordinary people. But they didn't pass by the majority that Johnson would have wanted.

In fact 19 Tory MPs joined Labour to vote against them, showing a deepening crisis for Johnson within his own party.

Just a few weeks ago the Tories announced a new health and social care levy—a hike in national insurance contributions.

They said they would cap the cost of care at £86,000. Johnson said it would mean the end of older and disabled people having to sell their family homes to pay for care homes.

And it would be an end to the widespread fears of millions of people about how they would cope financially with old age and illness.

Hidden

But last week we got to read the small print of the government's social care bill, carefully hidden away beneath the furore over the scrapping of part of the HS2 rail line.

Payments towards social care would be calculated in a way that leaves the poorest people paying the same as those whose homes are worth millions.

Now, only the amount they actually pay themselves—not the state help they get—will count towards the £86,000 total.

With the average care home stay lasting less than two years, this suggests many more low income people will die before reaching the cap. They will also lose a far greater proportion of their assets in the process.

If you live in house worth a million pounds, 90 percent of your assets will be protected if you need social



MIDWIVES PROTESTED in Parliament Square on Sunday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

care. But if your house is worth just £80,000, for example, you will lose nearly everything.

And government ministers are now having to admit their claims that no one would again be forced to sell their house to pay for care are completely untrue.

The best that business minister Paul Scully could offer this week was, "There will be fewer people selling their houses and hopefully none."

The government's change is expected to save it around £900 million a year by the time it becomes fully operational at the end of the decade.

So now, not only will less well-off people make a bigger contribution to social care costs than the rich through

higher national insurance.

They will be fleeced at the end of their lives too. The fiasco makes the case for the need to wrestle the entire social care system away from the private providers and agencies that manage care.

There needs to be a new system of social care that puts the needs and wants of the cared for at the centre.

This new system needs to be paid for by the wealthy few who have cashed in during the pandemic.

It is a tragedy that Labour is allowing the Tories to get away with their cascade of lies.

Keir Starmer is so scared of taxing the rich that none of his shadow ministers dare mention the only real way to "fix" social care for the better.

Health and Social Care Bill could lead to privatisation

MPS WERE set to vote on the Health and Care Bill for a final time on Tuesday, as Socialist Worker went to press.

The Tories claim the bill will allow the creation of a "truly integrated" health service in England. When it was announced, they also said it marked the end of decades of NHS privatisation.

But the bill does the opposite.

The 42 new independently-run "Integrated Care Systems" that will be set up give big business a seat at the table.

They will be able to press for more privatisation, and sell-offs of

the NHS. Already over 11 percent of the NHS budget goes to private companies. Another danger is that these groups will commission and deliver services within a geographical area.

That will mean the quality of NHS services could vary from one city or town to the next, and that national standards of care will be abandoned.

Doctor-led campaign organisation EveryDoctor, said, "Privatisation has been creeping into the NHS for three decades but if this bill passes, there'll be no turning back."

Midwives demand better

THOUSANDS OF midwives from all over Britain joined protests on Sunday. They are furious about increasingly dangerous maternity care—and the toll short staffing is taking on health workers.

Midwife Anna joined a rally of about 400 people in London's Parliament Square.

She told Socialist Worker that services were at a "tipping point".

"There are too few midwives and those we have are stretched to the limit," she said.

"Lots of us are stressed and everyone knows when they go into work they won't be able to provide the level of care they'd ideally want to."

"We are working extra hours, staying late and working on our breaks."

Former midwife Yasmin agrees. "I left because I was exhausted, overworked and stressed out," she told Socialist Worker.

The March With Midwives movement was set up on Facebook only a few weeks ago. It has no official backing from any of the health service unions.

Protests

Socialist Worker received reports of protests of between 100 and 300 people in Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Swansea and York.

Elizabeth, who works at the Imperial NHS trust, in west London, said, "I think midwives need more recognition."

"Our organising body, the RCM, is so quiet. I get a magazine every so often but I don't feel represented."

"The government can't ignore this protest."

"We need better funding, better training so we can keep doing our jobs."

Years of spending cuts and low pay have combined with the pandemic to bring the health service to the brink of disaster.

The midwives' movement must be brought together with others fighting health cuts, and the workers pushing for industrial action to win better pay,

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Tory plans will mean migrants will die in Channel

THE TORIES are ramping up their deadly attacks on refugees attempting to cross the Channel from France into Britain.

Tory home secretary Priti Patel wants to whip up a sense of “crisis” over refugees to deflect from their own crimes.

Patel has already suggested murderous tactics against them. She wants border guards to carry out “pushbacks”—using force against refugees in small rubber dinghies.

And she is pursuing a row with French and European Union governments, blaming them of failing to stop refugees.

Patel also tried to justify the new border measures by claiming that 70 percent of those arriving on small boats are “not genuine asylum seekers”, but even under the racist system that two-thirds are granted refugee status.

And Britain receives a fraction of the asylum applications of Germany and France.

The real crisis is that thousands of people are being forced to make dangerous journeys because of border laws.

Over 24,700 people have arrived on the south coast this year after

being forced to make the journey in dinghies.

Many have come from camps in France, where they face attacks and harassment from police. Some 300 riot cops armed with shields evicted refugees from a camp in Dunkirk last Tuesday.

They slashed open tents, confiscated belongings, and burned the camp to the ground.

Shamefully, the Labour Party joined in the attacks on refugees last week—accusing Patel of “failing” to stop refugees.

Labour’s shadow Home Secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds said this was a “broken promise to the British people.” And he called on the government to work with France in “joint enforcement operations away from the coast” to stop refugees.

Simon Hester is a volunteer with Hastings Support Refugees. He said, “It’s impossible to get on the back of a truck because of the measures in place.

“That’s why people are taking to boats—there’s no safe passage.”

The only way to stop dangerous crossings and save lives is to open the borders and let migrants in—whatever their reason for wanting to come to Britain.

Cricket’s racist rot is deep

CRICKETER AZEEM Rafiq’s testimony of his “inhumane” treatment at Yorkshire County Cricket Club (YCCC) is a devastating account of institutional racism.

Rafiq detailed the racist abuse he faced in evidence to the digital, culture, media and sport select committee and an employment tribunal on Tuesday.

Players, coaches and management carried out racist abuse despite complaints. Institutional racism at the club meant nothing was done to stop it.

Rafiq’s experience shows that the treatment went beyond YCCC and made it to the top of England cricket.

Rafiq said the slur “Paki” is still used at cricket clubs. And he cited Maurice Chambers’ experience of “monkey” and “banana” jibes in Essex.

Rafiq told MPs that at YCCC “there was a lot of ‘you lot sit over there near the toilets; the word Paki was used constantly.”

When asked by MPs whether he lost his career as a result of racism he replied, “Yes.”

This scandal is a sharp rebuff to the government’s finding in the Sewell report earlier this year in that there is no evidence of “institutional racism” in Britain.

For a longer version go to bit.ly/Rafiqweb

MIGRANTS ARE forced to make dangerous crossings to Britain

Borders bill will let state remove citizenship without any warning

THE TORIES are trying to grab new powers to strip people of their British citizenship without warning.

The power has been attached to the Nationality and Borders Bill that is presently going through parliament.

The bill’s Clause 9 exempts the government from having to give someone notice if it is not “reasonably practicable” to do so. And it wouldn’t have to give warning if the move was deemed to be in the interests of national security, diplomatic relations or otherwise in the public interest.

Frances Webber, Institute of Race Relations vice-chair, said, “This amendment sends the message that certain citizens, despite being born and brought up in the UK, remain migrants in this country.

The reduction in rights began in 2002, under the Labour government of Tony Blair.

It introduced measures that allowed British-born nationals and naturalised citizens to lose their nationality rights.

a person accused of speeding would be afforded more rights than someone at risk of being deprived of their British nationality.”

This latest assault underlines why the bill has to be defeated. Its central aim is to criminalise vulnerable asylum seekers. In keeping the borders shut, even rescuing a drowning migrant could be deemed illegal.

For the first time, how an asylum seeker travelled to Britain will determine the success of their application. Those travelling “illegally” will face deportation.

Labour says it opposes the bill. But this is partly because, in the words of shadow home secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds, Labour believes, “The bill is an attempt to talk tough, but will deliver nothing.”

It passed its second reading in July. The DUP bigots supported the government, with all other parties opposed. But it will take more than parliamentary opposition to confront the bill and make it unworkable.

Maya Foa, the director of Reprieve, told the Guardian newspaper, “Under this regime,

shouting “Revolution, nothing else”. Rittenhouse was charged with homicide after killing Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber at a protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on 25 August 2020.

The protest was organised in response to the racist shooting of Jacob Blake by white police officer Rusten Sheskey two days before. It was part of the great wave of Black Lives Matter (BLM) revolt against police brutality and racism in the US.

Rittenhouse’s acquittal came after a charade of a trial. Judge Bruce Schroeder ruled that the words “victims” or even “alleged victims” could not be used to describe Rosenbaum or Huber in the courtroom.

The verdict is another example of a rigged and racist judicial system. The only way to achieve lasting change is to revive the BLM protests that saw up to 26 million people on the streets in the US and millions more worldwide.

Read more at bit.ly/RittenhouseSW

Protest outside the court in Wisconsin, US, that cleared Rittenhouse last week

Far right killer found not guilty in US court

FAR RIGHT gunman Kyle Rittenhouse, who shot and killed two men and wounded another during a protest in the US against racist cops last year, was found not guilty of all charges on Friday.

The most violent fascist forces that cluster around Donald Trump’s wing of the Republicans will see the verdict as an invitation to attack black people, anti-racists and the left.

It is a return to injustice, as usual, following the temporary blip of Derek Chauvin being found guilty of murdering George Floyd.

Small groups of protesters took to the streets immediately in Brooklyn, Chicago, Portland, Oakland, Boston, and Columbus, Ohio.

In Columbus, Ohio, about 150 protesters gathered outside the statehouse, chanting “The whole damn system is guilty as hell”, “No justice, no peace”, and “Send that killer kid to jail”.

In Portland, Oregon, protesters forced open a jail gate. In Oakland, California, a crowd marched from the city hall to the federal building,

Threat to Palestine solidarity

THE TORIES were set to outlaw support for Palestinian resistance group Hamas as Socialist Worker went to press.

A banning order proposed by Tory home secretary Priti Patel would make it a crime to be a member of—or encourage support for—Hamas.

This could include supporting Hamas against Israeli assaults on the Gaza Strip.

Anyone found guilty could face up to 14 years in prison.

The move is an attempt to further criminalise support for Palestinian resistance—and the main target is Muslims.

In a speech last week, Patel described Hamas as “fundamentally and rabidly antisemitic.”

is the Israeli state, not Jews. It has widespread support among Palestinians because of its resistance to Israel.

But supporters of Israel want to paint opposition to Israel as motivated by antisemitism—not anger at its oppression of Palestinians.

Now they hope the law will allow cops to “crack down” on Muslims who join Palestine solidarity demonstrations.

Muslims in Britain can already be referred to the government’s Prevent “anti-extremism” programme simply for supporting Palestine.

Now the Tories want to silence them further—with the threat of prison.

Hateful—Priti Patel

This is based on the fact that Hamas formally refuses to recognise the state of Israel—built on stolen Palestinian land.

Hamas demands the right of Palestinians to return to their homes. Israel rejects this because its racist laws say too many Arabs threaten its existence.

In its charter, Hamas says its enemy

companies. Many of the countries in the Global South rely on aid and international Covid response programmes for vaccines, but these are limited.

One immediate measure would be to remove the patents on the vaccines so poorer countries could manufacture their own supplies. The main forces opposed to that are the governments of Britain, Germany, Norway and Switzerland plus the European Union. The government’s target is to send 100 million vaccine doses

to vulnerable nations by mid-2022. That’s already too late, and this target will never be hit unless they increase the monthly donation from just 5.1 million doses to 11.5 million.

So far just 20 million doses have been exported. And without vaccines, there is a much higher risk of new Covid variants that could see even more horrendous death tolls everywhere.

As always the lives of the poor are always cheap, whether in Britain or across the globe.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

TORIES ON THE ROCKS, BUT LABOUR STEERS TO RIGHT

BORIS JOHNSON made a pig’s ear of a speech to a room full of top bosses at their CBI organisation’s annual conference on Monday

But what once might have been treated as one of his trademark gaffes is now an outward sign that his leadership is stuck in the mud.

After losing his place in a mess of papers, Johnson rambled about his visit to Peppa Pig World.

Even his own people think the wheels are coming off.

One “Downing Street source” said there was “a lot of concern inside the building about the PM. It’s just not working.”

Meanwhile, Tory MPs made threats about a possible vote of no confidence in his leadership.

The CBI matters to the Tories—they are meant to be the party of the bosses.

Yet for a Tory prime minister, Johnson has never been totally aligned with what the CBI wants.

While he championed Brexit, the CBI wanted Britain to remain in the European Union because it thought leaving would hit bosses’ profits.

Johnson’s reply in 2018 was “fuck business.”

Instead, he posed as being on the side of ordinary people who voted for Brexit in a kick at the establishment. But now there are signs that this is breaking down.

A string of corruption scandals exposed how Tory politicians used the pandemic to enrich themselves and their mates. At the same time, they are bearing down on living standards.

A significant number of Tory MPs rebelled against plans to make poorer people pay more for social care. They worried it would cost them support in future elections.

Yet the Labour Party was almost silent. Labour leader Keir Starmer is too keen to win the backing of bosses to attack Johnson over poverty and hardship.

“Labour is back in business,” he told the CBI. “The dual meaning is entirely deliberate,” he added, just in case anyone didn’t get the joke.

“I can promise you that the only F words I will be using are foreign investment, fair trade, fiscal policy and fiduciary duty.”

Instead, Labour chose this week to attack the Tories for not being nasty enough to refugees crossing the Channel. The party hopes disgraceful rhetoric about “broken promises” to halt refugee crossings will help to win support of ordinary people.

The only people it will help are the racist right.

Labour tries to cover its scapegoating with fake progressive language about wanting to save refugees from dangerous crossings.

But Tory “rebels” and forces even further to their right can be full throated in their racism—all while pretending to side with ordinary people over living standards too.

That makes it ever more important to build movements against racism, and workplace struggles to fight back over pay.

Without a challenge, Johnson could survive or be replaced by someone even worse. Then we’d all be in the shit.

VACCINE INEQUALITY WILL KILL

PEOPLE AGED over 40 in England can now book their booster Covid vaccinations.

Scotland will follow with a similar plan soon. But as a third vaccine is rolled out in Britain, many people around the world are unable to access their first.

From the start there has been deep inequality about who receives life-saving treatment and who is at the back of the queue

Powerful Western nations have the money to scoop up products from the big pharmaceutical

companies. Many of the countries in the Global South rely on aid and international Covid response programmes for vaccines, but these are limited.

One immediate measure would be to remove the patents on the vaccines so poorer countries could manufacture their own supplies. The main forces opposed to that are the governments of Britain, Germany, Norway and Switzerland plus the European Union. The government’s target is to send 100 million vaccine doses

to vulnerable nations by mid-2022. That’s already too late, and this target will never be hit unless they increase the monthly donation from just 5.1 million doses to 11.5 million.

So far just 20 million doses have been exported. And without vaccines, there is a much higher risk of new Covid variants that could see even more horrendous death tolls everywhere.

As always the lives of the poor are always cheap, whether in Britain or across the globe.



ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



The West and Russia play dangerous game

THERE ARE two really dangerous geographical zones where conflict, even war, between major powers, could be sparked.

The first are the South and East China seas, where China is asserting various territorial claims against neighbouring states. The other lies in the borderlands between Russia and the European Union (EU).

The first is probably the more dangerous, because it is here that the US and China might clash.

But the second is the more immediate flashpoint. Two states are in play here, Belarus and Ukraine. Both were long part of the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire.

And both only broke free of Russian control when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Both have complicated affinities and tensions—culturally, politically, and economically—with Russia. Both have manoeuvred between it and the Western bloc since 1991. But in the end, Belarus tilted eastwards and Ukraine westwards.

Belarus's president Alexander Lukashenko has depended on the support of his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin since he fiddled his re-election in 2020 and crushed the opposition.

Confrontation has been growing between Belarus and the EU in the past few weeks. With Putin's apparent encouragement, Lukashenko has been pushing migrants and refugees across the border with Poland, in retaliation against sanctions imposed by the EU.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian government is talking up war with Russia. The latest warning comes from Kyrylo Budanov, the chief of Ukraine's defence intelligence. He accuses Russia of planning to invade Ukraine from the north, east, and south in the New Year.

In 2014 Putin reacted to the overthrow of the corrupt Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich by sending Russian troops in to seize the Crimean Peninsula. Since then he has waged a proxy war of varying degrees of intensity against the pro-Western Ukrainian government.

Some 92,000 Russian troops are massed on the border with Ukraine. One can't rule out that Putin might actually use them.

The US broke promises made to the last Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev, by expanding the Nato military alliance and the EU to Russia's borders. The security analyst George Friedman pointed out in 2014, "Ukraine is about 300 miles from Moscow at its closest point."

"Were Belarus and Ukraine both admitted to Nato, the city of Smolensk, which had been deep inside the Soviet Union, would have become a border town. Russia has historically protected itself with its depth.

Hostage

"The loss of Ukraine as a buffer to the West leaves Russia without that depth and hostage to the intentions and capabilities of Europe and the United States."

The current Ukrainian government would love to join the EU and Nato—something that Putin has warned would cross a red line. Sounding the alarm about Russian invasion may be Ukraine's way of pressuring the US and EU for more support.

Budanov says he wants more US military aid. "The US should give us everything we didn't get before. And right now, it's the right time for this because after, it could be very late."

Boris Johnson has already obliged with a deal signed this month to supply Ukraine with ten naval vessels and missiles.

Putin may be playing mind games as well. He built up Russian troops on the Ukrainian border in the spring only to pull them back.

The West are probing his defences too, notably in the strategically important Black Sea.

Russia seized Crimea partly to secure its naval base at Sebastopol. HMS Defender, part of the Carrier Strike Force headed by the new British carrier Queen Elizabeth II, made a provocative voyage into the Black Sea in June. Putin has been complaining about more recent Nato drills in the Black Sea.

It all looks like manoeuvring for advantage rather than preparations for war.

Joe Biden has sought to calm relations with Russia in order to concentrate on China, which he rightly sees as the main threat to US global hegemony.

But, amid the build-up of tensions, imperialist power games could escalate out of anyone's control and into a real confrontation.

Stand with climate activists against crackdown by state

Jail for protesters is wrong, argues Charlie Kimber

DAYS AFTER the Cop26 conference ended in abject failure, the British state has jailed nine members of the direct action climate group Insulate Britain.

They were convicted of contempt of court on Wednesday for breaking an injunction not to protest on the M25 motorway.

Ana Heytawin and Louis McKecknie received sentences of three months. Six other defendants were sentenced to four months.

Ben Taylor said he would continue protests and so was sentenced to six months.

Judge Dame Victoria Sharp said Taylor's refusal to give up was "inflammatory" and a "call to arms".

She gave him a longer sentence "to deter him from committing further breaches".

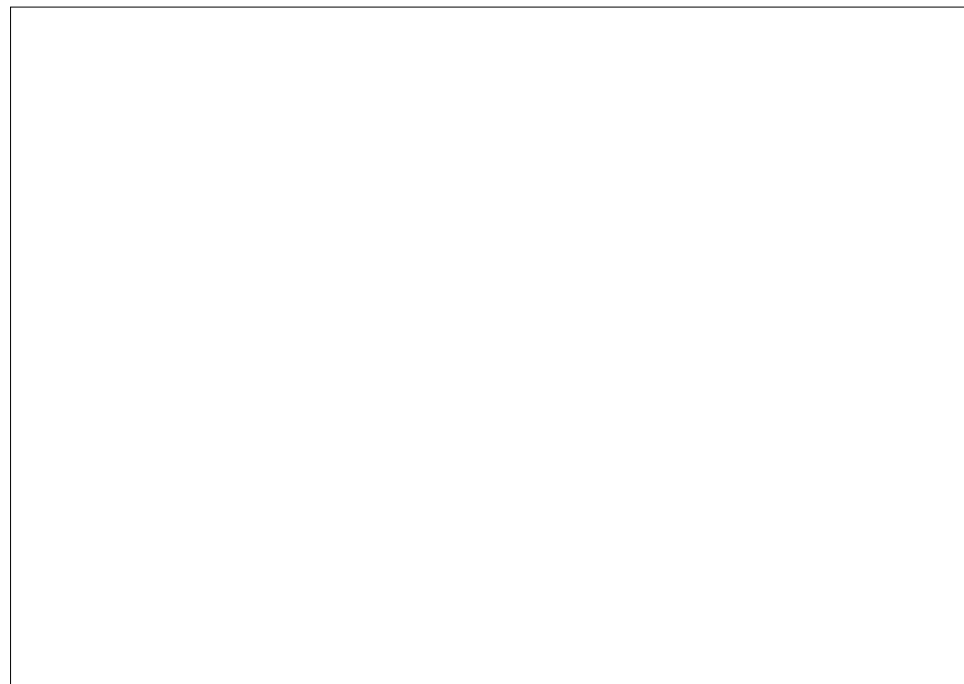
The group and their supporters chanted, "We are unstoppable, another world is possible," as they were led to the cells.

Defiant

The nine issued a defiant open letter after they were jailed. It said, "To the government we say, you can't imprison a flood, there are no unlimited fines against a famine, you can't bankrupt a fire.

"To the public we say, no one is coming to save you. In the past, when governments have failed to protect their people the right thing to do is to highlight this injustice, breaking the law if needed.

"This is what the suffragettes and Martin Luther



THE NINE jailed activists stand outside the High Court (above) Protests in solidarity (left)

King did and it is what Insulate Britain has done."

The group's immediate demand is for the government to fund and take responsibility for the insulation of all social housing in Britain by 2025.

It says this will save lives, particularly of older people, and begin to tackle the climate emergency.

Blocking roads is a mild response to the

devastating reality of systemic environmental collapse.

It's the actions of government ministers and fossil fuel chief executives who threaten the future, not those who hold up traffic.

On Saturday protesters raged against the jailing of the nine activists and blocked several bridges in London. More than 120 people were arrested at one mobilisation.

Activists blocked bridges in Vauxhall and Lambeth, south London, holding signs that read, "Betrayed by my government."

One protester, Gabriella, said, "I have known for a couple of years that the only thing that is going to serve us is civil resistance. I have faith in people coming together.

"Solutions to this crisis exist, we just need the political will to do it."

The protest was in breach of a High Court injunction that banned the blocking of traffic by protest groups.

Laws against protest are set to worsen when the repressive police bill, currently in the House Of Lords, is implemented.

Cop26 was a terrible confirmation that the system will allow colossal deaths rather than interfere with the machinery of profit. There has to be a militant mass movement to fight for change.

Got a story?
Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Amazon deforestation in Brazil 'out of control'

THE DESTRUCTION of the Amazon rainforest accelerated at the fastest rate in over a decade this year. The Brazilian rainforest has suffered 13,235 square kilometres of deforestation in this year alone.

This level of destruction is up 22 percent from what it was in 2020.

The news comes after Brazil's far right president Jair Bolsonaro signed a promise at the Cop26 climate conference to reduce deforestation.

But Bolsonaro worked hard to withhold

deforestation data until after the conference to push forward "positive developments".

"There should be sanctions", said Cristiane Mazzetti, forest campaigner for Greenpeace Brazil. "Brazil assumed a posture of lying during Cop, trying to sell itself as a sustainable country, but deforestation is out of control.

"We had already sounded the alert before that leaders shouldn't buy the empty promises of a government that has acted proactively to weaken environmental protection."

Bolsonaro's lies show how he will continue to destroy the Brazilian rainforest at any cost.

But they also show how easily world leaders will break flimsy climate promises made at Cop26.

Sophie Squire

FIGURE IT OUT

13,235

Square kilometres—the amount of rainforest lost to deforestation in Brazil between August 2020 and July 2021

10,851

The amount lost in the same period between 2019 and 2020—making this year's figure an increase of 22 percent

Far right feed off marches in Europe over Covid laws

The far right is gaining from frustration over how governments deal with Covid, argues Yuri Prasad

LARGE ANGRY protests and sporadic rioting broke out in parts of Europe last week as governments introduced new Covid restrictions.

There were violent demonstrations in Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands. In Vienna, Austria 40,000 people marched with some fighting the police in front of the Heldenplatz palace gate.

In Rotterdam, Dutch police shot and wounded at least two people during rioting. Protesters hit back with rocks and fireworks.

In Brussels, Belgium cars were torched and police vehicles and an ambulance were attacked.

The wave of anger on the streets is driven by opposition to new Covid restrictions being introduced to counter a new Covid wave sweeping Europe.

Infections in many countries are now running at highs not seen since the peak of the pandemic earlier this year. And many of those filling hospital intensive care wards are unvaccinated.

Austria started a national up to lockdown of up to 20 days this week, and other countries may follow suit.

The government says it will enforce a “vaccine mandate”—a legal requirement to be jabbed—in February next year.

Austria’s far right Freedom Party is heading the street movement.

It is using its platform in parliament to tell people that vaccines don’t work, masks are a threat to liberty—and that a drug used to treat parasitic worms can cure coronavirus.

The protests in the Netherlands are focused on new laws which will restrict Covid passports to those who have had the vaccine. That means those unvaccinated will be shut out of society.

The new restrictions are an admission by the state that it has failed, both to stop the spread of infections, and to persuade everyone of the need for vaccinations and

READ MORE

● Anti-lockdown protest was contradictory pull to right. bit.ly/30GNZsl

● Mandatory vaccinations risk making NHS crisis worse. bit.ly/3qU6950

● Should having no job mean there’s no job for workers? bit.ly/3HCXTwd

● Conspiracy theories don’t explain society’s problems. bit.ly/3cDThHG

prevention measures. And again, the far right is seeking to capitalise on the anger.

The Voorpost group came on to the streets with their orange, white and blue version of the Dutch flag—the one used by the Dutch Nazi party.

The right across Europe is tapping into growing frustrations, particularly among those who run small businesses.

They feed off a growing distrust of the state, felt most sharply at the bottom of society.

If the European governments wanted to win an ideological battle over vaccinations, they should have made the programme far more democratic by allowing people to run the services in their communities and giving them control of the budgets.

They should also properly compensate everyone who lost out financially due to restrictions. Crucially, they should have announced a citizenship programme for all migrants so that people without legal status would have felt at ease about accessing healthcare.

These measures would have made Covid measures more effective—and undercut the right by isolating them from wider support.

Now, the only weapon the ruling class has left is repression, and that is exactly the response the right was hoping for.

THOUSANDS OF nationalists, conspiracy theorists and anti-vaxxers protested in Vienna, Austria.

PICTURE: IVAN RADIC

Commuters let down as the Tories scrap new rail lines

THE TORIES faced public anger last week over their decision to axe sections of the high speed rail project, HS2. Ministers had promised HS2 would improve transport links for some of the worst connected places in Britain.

Socialist Worker opposes HS2 because of its devastating environmental consequences. But it’s urgent that transport issues are properly addressed.

The eastern section of the HS2 project would have seen trains run from Birmingham to Leeds and the east Midlands.

Bradford, the worst connected city in Britain, would have been a station on the line.

According to some reports, the city is also likely to be missed off the new Northern Powerhouse rail (NPR) line.

Bradford East Labour MP Imran Hussain said, “There are simply no publishable words that can describe my anger towards their Northern Powerhouse betrayal.”

He added that a “consolation prize” of improvements to travel from Leeds was no consolation, but a “deliberate two-fingers to

Bradford”. But this is just the tip of the iceberg of how a privatised rail network is failing.

Earlier this year the Tories promised that trains to Bradford would run to London King’s Cross six times a day. But from next May the service will be reduced to once a day.

Residents report that trains are already overcrowded and infrequent. Travel times are also significantly longer because routes to other destinations are only possible via Leeds.

The state the rail network is in across the country is shameful, and people are right to be angry that they are missing out on travel developments once more.

They should also be angry that the government prioritises a network that knocks just minutes off travel time for commuters journeying from Birmingham to London.

Phase one of the HS2 project is expected to be completed between 2029 and 2033.

But the project has already seen massive delays and is becoming evermore ludicrously expensive.

The stretch of HS2 that is going ahead will primarily benefit big business.

In a statement, Stop HS2 spokesperson Joe Rukin said, “The cancellation of the eastern leg of HS2 is a vindication of everything we have been saying for a decade.

“You can deliver more benefits to more people more quickly for less money without the massive environmental impact by upgrading existing infrastructure. “People need the reopening of old lines and sustainable local transport to get in and around the towns and cities where they live and work.

“They don’t need a fast train for fat cats that only ever got this far to prop up the powerful lobbyists from the construction industry.”

HS2 was never created to benefit ordinary people. We need a greener transport system designed for the majority.

Sophie Squire

 **On other pages...**
Lecturers’ universities fight is on
>>>Page 17



Indian farmers push back Modi's law

Indian farmers celebrate the withdrawal of Modi's plans to wipe out small farms. But battles remain, reports Yuri Prasad

FARMERS ACROSS India are celebrating after the government was forced into a humiliating climbdown on its agriculture laws.

Last year hard right prime minister Narendra Modi pushed through legislation designed to wipe out small farms and replace them with giant agribusiness.

But after more than a year of militant campaigning Modi's plans now lie in tatters. "I urge farmers to return home to their families and let's start afresh," pleaded the prime minister.

Ramandeep Singh Mann, a farmer leader and activist, said he was "ecstatic" after hearing the news. The feeling was "like you've conquered Mount Everest," he said.

Mann and thousands of others have blockaded roads and organised huge protest marches—and earlier this year even stormed the capital New Delhi with wave after wave of tractors.

Their agitation has won the respect and admiration of all those who have suffered under the BJP government.

Millions of people have been hit by Modi's terrible mishandling of the economy and the pandemic.

The government has desperately tried to divert attention by prolonging a conflict in the disputed Kashmir region.

Harsh

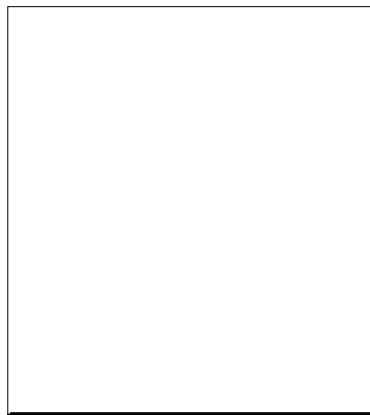
It has also used harsh laws and violent thugs to target Muslims as an "anti-national" enemy within.

But the last year has also shown the limits of the BJP's power.

At times, the farmers' movement came close to linking with workers' strikes. Such a combination could have brought down the government.

But the main left parties were far more concerned with how this might affect state elections during the course of the year to truly throw their weight behind it.

As a result, many dangers for



Farmers stormed New Delhi

farmers remain. "There is no trust, no confidence in this government," said Om Pal Singh Malik, a protest leader at the camp in Ghazipur, on the outskirts of New Delhi. Malik is right to be dubious.

A key reason for Modi's retreat is that BJP strategists believe the anti-farmer laws could cost them dearly in the forthcoming elections in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

Once the voting period is over it's possible Modi will return to the warpath.

And there are other reasons for the farmers to keep up their fight.

Losses

"What is there to cheer about?" asked Jagtar Singh, who cultivates ten acres in Punjab. "The farm laws were wrong so he has taken them back. "Who is going to pay for the losses we have suffered in the past 14 months?"

More than 600 demonstrators have died from heat, cold and exhaustion over the past year of protests. Four more were killed last month when a car owned by the son of India's junior home minister rammed into them.

The farmers have already shown the way to deal with Modi and his gangsters.

They must stand firm until all their demands are met.

FARMERS USED tractors to strengthen their protests

CHILE

Far right takes early lead in elections

A FAR right lawyer who wants to crack down on indigenous people and migrants will face a former student leader in Chile's presidential elections run-off next month.

In 2019 an increase in the price of public transports sparked protests.

To calm the movement the state promised that the country's constitution, written at the time of the brutal military dictatorship

of Augusto Pinochet, would be rewritten. The candidate that wins this election will lead that process.

Jose Antonio Kast, who founded the Chilean Republican Party leader, will face Gabriel Boric, a member of the left wing Social Convergence party.

Kast had taken 28.52 percent in the first round of the election, as Socialist Worker went to press, ahead of Boric, who had won

24.71 percent of the vote. Kast has run on an anti-abortion, anti-gay marriage platform.

His supporters' marches include US Confederate flags and "Make Chile Great Again" placards.

Kast is close to Brazil's far right president Jair Bolsonaro and is an open admirer of Pinochet.

Boric's only hope is to tap into the anger against neoliberalism and reflect the anger shown during the 2019 protests.

GUADELOUPE

Workers' protests and strikes paralyse economy

A HUGE movement of strikes and protests has swept the French "overseas region" of Guadeloupe in the Caribbean.

Health workers, firefighters and teachers have paralysed the territory by striking and blocking roads for over a week.

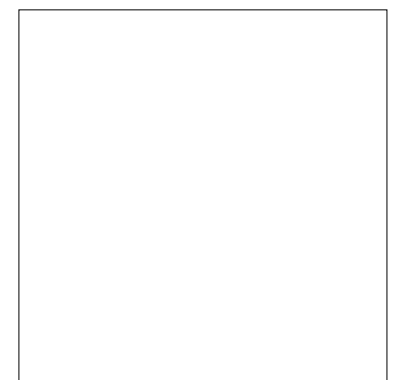
The revolt began against mandatory vaccination for hospital workers and firefighters but drew in issues of a lack of democracy, unemployment and poverty.

Only a third of people in

Guadeloupe are vaccinated. The distrust of the French state is amplified by people's experience of how their lives are viewed as cheap.

France authorised a pesticide linked to cancer—chlordecone—for use on banana crops for two decades and now nearly all adult residents have traces of it in their blood.

The state has responded to the revolt by curfews, arrests and sending in police special forces.



Overturned car forms a barricade

Gains in Glasgow

CAMPAIGNERS against library closures in Glasgow achieved a small victory last week.

The Scottish government agreed to provide funding to re-open five libraries that were closed when the Covid pandemic began.

The libraries are among 70 public venues, including community centres and sports facilities, that have now been closed for more than 18 months.

Many of these are in the poorest areas of the city.

The Scottish National Party-run council—and its Glasgow Life “arm’s length” organisation that runs the venues—initially said Covid was the reason for closing them.

But now they are seeking to sell them off to private investors or through progressive-sounding “community buy-outs”. These leave local communities responsible for running the venues.

There has been a six-month long campaign of weekly protests outside several of the libraries.

There has also been a city-wide campaign, including two well-attended demonstrations, called by Glasgow Against Closures (GAC). Without that, the libraries would have remained closed.

But while the re-opening of the five libraries is welcome, funding is only guaranteed for six months, so the campaign continues.

GAC is demanding that the libraries be reopened on a permanent basis. All the other closed venues must also be reopened.

And Glasgow Life should be brought back under local authority control with no job losses.

Iain Ferguson
Glasgow

Can we take action over rising rents?

RENTS ARE rising at the fastest pace in 13 years.

I’m part of Eviction Resistance. We organise collectively to stop people from being evicted. The London Renters group has hundreds of people who go round and block the bailiffs. But that means we only see people who are being evicted.

How do you stop rents going up? We need more council houses. We need the government to open up



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Attack on anti-Zionism is an attack on left wing Jews

AT THE Labour Friends of Israel annual lunch last week Keir Starmer said anti-Zionism had no place in the Labour Party, and described it as a type of antisemitism.

This unambiguous conflation of anti-Zionism threatens our ability of members to legitimately criticise and hold the settler-colonialist state of Israel to account.

But it also stifles my right, as a British, anti-Zionist, self-loving Jew, to self-determination and political freedom.

What Starmer and Zionists refuse to consider is that my love and attachment to Jewish identity and values is why I condemn Israel’s occupation of Palestine.

Starmer’s declaration is backed

up by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition that Labour adopted in 2018.

Both cement the profoundly antisemitic view that I do not get to determine what I think politically as a Jew beyond what is assumed to be in my best interest by Zionists.

By mandating that anti-Zionism is antisemitism, Starmer commands that I either love Israel or hate myself.

He presents left wing British Jews with no choice but to be gagged and barred from independent political thought by Zionist politics or be removed from the party.

This has manifested itself in harassment and discrimination

against left wing Jews. A study by Jewish Voice for Labour reports that Jews are five times more likely to face antisemitism charges than non-Jewish Labour members.

Moves to make Zionism and the state of Israel untouchable are ultimately at the expense of Jews and our safety.

I am not made to feel safer by this rhetoric and the policies it leads to.

I will feel safe when my Palestinian comrades are free.

Our liberation is bound together and I will not allow my identity to be bastardised and co-opted to lend support to an apartheid regime.

Bella Segal
Bournemouth

Labour MPs’ gambling free gifts

WHO CAN be surprised that Tory MPs stand up for the gambling industry and take free gifts from betting companies?

But what about Labour MPs? Some 28 MPs have taken almost £225,000 in wages and gifts from the gambling industry since August 2020. Most of those were Tories—but nine of them were Labour.

Labour MP John Spellar spoke up for the gambling industry in a parliamentary debate last year. He talked of an urgent need to

“improve and continue Britain’s attractiveness” as a casino destination.

He just so happened to have taken a free cricket match ticket at a cost of £874.80 from the Betting and Gaming Council.

The council’s head? Ex-Labour MP Michael Dugher.

Rebecca Kearns
Carlisle

Just a thought...

Labour a bad alternative

YOU SAY the Tories’ corruption scandals have finally put Boris Johnson on the back foot (Socialist Worker, 17 November).

The trouble is, the choice between him and Keir Starmer is similar to asking turkeys to choose between being roasted or boiled at Christmas.

Either way, we all end up stuffed.

Leslie Bridges
On Facebook

Bigots always get their say

THE ACADEMICS that are setting up a new right wing university in the United States claim their free speech is under threat.

But bigots have most of society as a safe haven—not just religious institutions but most of the media including the BBC and the Guardian newspaper.

Beth Young
On Facebook

Hidden side to world wars

GOOD ARTICLE on Britain’s colonial soldiers (Socialist Worker, 17 November).

While growing up, we were taught about the First and Second World wars. But we heard nothing about the people from Britain’s colonies losing their lives for the Empire.

Modina Khan
On Facebook

The shame of Keir Starmer

KEIR STARMER was asked last week whether he thought Jeremy Corbyn would have been a better prime minister than Boris Johnson.

He dodged the question—five times. The party has changed he said, again and again.

We shouldn’t be surprised, given how Labour MPs and staff sabotaged Corbyn’s leadership. Or how Starmer has spent most of his leadership supporting the government.

But it does beg a question for Corbyn supporters. Why stay in a party that seemingly hates you more than it hates the Tories?

Sharon Cresswell
Northallerton

More than just Yorkshire cricket

RACISM BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

Former cricketer, Azeem Rafiq lifted the lid on the vile racism he experienced at Yorkshire. Isabel Ringrose spoke to Asian people across the county who understood the impact of his experiences only too well

CRICKETER AZEEM Rafiq sharing his harrowing experiences of racism at Yorkshire County Cricket Club has helped unmask institutional racism both within the sport, and wider society.

Hundreds of thousands of people with South Asian heritage—and Muslim and Pakistani backgrounds, in particular—live across Yorkshire. Most encounter racism daily—and Rafiq’s account exposes only a fraction of the casual and institutional abuse directed towards Asians.

Farzana Yousaf is the equalities officer for the Unison union at Sheffield Hallam University. Her parents came from Pakistan in the late 1960s.

“At 18 I went to Hallam University and my name was changed to Ana. I told them my name and it was shortened because no one could say it,” she said.

Farzana said that after the Stephen Lawrence case institutions were supposed to act to stamp out racism.

“The university ticks boxes still,” she explained. “I can count how many black people are in professional services on the admin side—there are none.

“Once I wore a headscarf and an older colleague said, ‘Ana why have you got that costume on’.

“People don’t always come out and say this is happening because we’re in the minority. To report things you need evidence, but it’s so difficult to evidence looks or words.”

Laila (not her real name) is an English teacher and NEU union member at a secondary school in Bradford.

She told Socialist Worker how most

schools are “segregated”—either made up of Asian or white students. “Very rarely is there a 50/50 mix in West Yorkshire,” Laila explained.

Laila said that many parents experienced racism as children. “They feel safer sending their children to the local school of mostly Asian kids,” she said.

Between teachers, racism is rife. “To get to the top you have to fit the image. The student leadership team are all part of that image,” Laila added. “So many people are passed on promotions.

“The kids pick up on it and feel the tension. Staff are openly racist to other staff members in front of students.”

Comments

Students also face racism from teachers, such as comments and name calling or names being shortened.

Laila explained, “You ask students what they want to do and if they say university, it’s always local ones. They’re not trying to go to Oxford or anywhere in London because they’re told they’re not good enough.

“One ex-student was at Bradford

college and had a placement at Bradford football club, but he dropped out. I asked why and he said racism.

“There’s not one Asian player on the Bradford team, even though there are such good players.”

Abrar Javid is one of the Rotherham 12. He was accused of violent disorder for counter-protesting a Britain First march in 2015 and was later acquitted.

He told Socialist Worker that although racism exists on the streets, “it’s more insidious at institutional level—like in South Yorkshire Police (SYP) or the local council. Growing up you knew you were treated differently,” Abrar said. “It was upsetting—you’re judged by your skin, not who you are as a person.

“I know of people who have just as good qualifications but don’t get responses to their CVs like their white counterparts. They’ve changed their name and got better responses.” In 2014 the Jay report unveiled historic child sexual exploitation and grooming in Rotherham.

“This caused a lot of racial tension fed by the media, politicians, and even the local council who cowered towards the far right, as did the SYP,” Abrar explained.

“These institutions played on the narrative that anyone Muslim was directly involved in grooming or indirectly to blame.

“Girls had been crying to white police officers for help, who looked down on them because their class meant they weren’t worth investigating. The police said they didn’t investigate because they didn’t want to rock the boat—this is totally contradictory when looking at

the disparity of Asians in prison.”

Siege

Bella lives in Bradford and moved from Pakistan in 1968 with her family when she was two years old.

“When I was young I suffered a lot of racism, especially because of the National Front,” she explained. “It was constant in the 1970s and 80s, and we took the brunt of it.

“Racism was openly coming to get you—it was like being under siege.”

When Bella moved to what was then a predominantly white area, her children were attacked by two teenagers. “They started throwing stones at my three and four year old children,” she explained.

“My elder son went to stop them. Suddenly two police squad cars arrived to arrest him. They didn’t ask what was done to us. There was a big army of police—it was disgraceful behaviour.

“You can’t go to the police. They’re one sided, they’re the most racist most of the time. Even now there’s places I will not go—there’s areas and estates that have got the most racist people you’ll come across,” Bella added.

Kausar Jan is a teacher and activist in Leeds. “Every time something bad happens there’s a ripple effect on Muslims,” she said. “The narrative is that anything terror related is blamed on Muslims—it’s convenient for them to say that because it suits a specific agenda.”

Kausar added Boris Johnson “is the biggest Islamophobe”. “Muslim women were called letterboxes by Johnson and then there was a huge spike in Islamophobia towards Muslims,

especially women.

“From the top it will trickle down and embolden racists who know they can get away with it,” she explained.

“We need to completely change the infrastructure and make an inclusive society,” Laila agrees. “We’re fighting within the English department to implement historical texts in the curriculum—it’s too white, British, middle class,” she said.

“Students learn about Greek mythology, but they don’t know who Malcolm X is. Attitudes need to change towards racism and changes implemented in daily practice, not just one week a year.”

There are also cultural barriers between the leadership, staff and students. “We get two weeks for Christmas—but for Eid or Diwali you have to book a day off,” Laila said. “Staff are only allowed three days off across the year for two Eids. The school says students only get one day off for Eid—but it’s a two day event.”

“It’s a divide and conquer strategy. We’re so busy pointing at each other we don’t see what is being pushed through the back door.

“Every sphere of society and public institutions has racism within, from the NHS, police force and education. We’ve all got to come together.”

Abrar said, “Racists—whether the police, council, cricket clubs or on the street—want us to believe that we’re divided down racial lines and that isn’t the case. We’ve got a big battle on our hands. The prime minister can get away with calling people piccaninnies and bank robbers, it’s scary to think that these things are not seen as toxic.

“I believe grassroots level mobilisation is still strong enough to fight these battles. People are not born ignorant, they’re fed lies by this government

“The club called it banter—to me calling someone a Paki and pouring wine down their throat isn’t banter,” she said.

“It’s refreshing that Rafiq has spoken out—it’ll mean more people speak out. It resonated with my experiences.”

Abrar said Rafiq has shown “resilience”. “We’ve spoken at length about his horrendous experiences. He was made to feel like a trouble causer and the result is he inspired victims of racism and others to stand up to any form of hate.”

Kausar said, “Sharing his experience has awoken racial trauma in many of us. Hearing his account, we know that’s what people go through day in and day out.

He added that until there’s “real change” racism will not be beaten. “People aren’t questioning why we’ve got division in society and where that moral panic is coming from.

“It’s a divide and conquer strategy. We’re so busy pointing at each other we don’t see what is being pushed through the back door.

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“I believe grassroots level mobilisation is still strong enough to fight these battles. People are not born ignorant, they’re fed lies by this government

A terrible history of prejudice

YORKSHIRE WAS one of the epicentres of emerging Islamophobia in the 1980s.

Most commentators trace the development of this new racism back to international events, such as the Iranian revolution or the 9/11 terror attacks.

But Islamophobia in Britain had particular characteristics.

For opportunist reasons, Margaret Thatcher’s Tory government tried to shift debates around race away from skin colour onto the terrain of culture.

It insisted some cultures were incompatible with “Britishness”—and events in Yorkshire were to help clarify for the right just which cultures they had in mind.

In 1984 Bradford headmaster Ray Honeyford launched an attack on multicultural education in the hard right journal, The Sailsbury Review.

Over 80 percent of pupils at his school were Asian, and most were Muslims. Honeyford claimed the education of white children suffered because they were a minority.

He berated Muslim girls for what they wore, and he described their parents as having the “hysterical political temperament of the Indian subcontinent”.

When pressure forced the local education authority to “retire” Honeyford, the Tories and their newspapers ran a defence campaign.

Those who singled out Muslims as un-British moved from the fringes to the centre of the Conservative Party.

In 1987 a new school row broke out in Dewsbury. Some 26 white parents refused to send their children to Headfield Middle School, where 500 out of 590 pupils were Asian. The parents denied they were racist, but their fears centred



Bradford pupils protest at school racism

on the possible “Muslim influence” the school might have on their offspring.

They said they wanted more emphasis on “Christian” teaching and accused Headfield of not celebrating Christmas—it did—and forcing pupils to make chapatis on Pancake Day—it didn’t.

Campaign

The parents’ year-long campaign had the implicit backing of Tory education secretary Kenneth Baker. He’d pushed “reforms” giving parents more choice over schools and these helped the campaign to victory.

Similar battles soon raged. And the rapid spread of Islamophobia also encouraged a conservative reaction.

Socially conservative elements within Asian communities used the example of Headfield to demand separate faith schools.

In Dewsbury, many Asian parents called for Zakaria Girls School to be turned into a Muslim school.

They were pilloried as “reverse racists”.

But it was the right that had first played the race card, igniting a process that pushed education in Yorkshire’s towns to become ever more segregated.

and the press. That takes a national movement to get people to understand and see through the propaganda.”

Bella agrees that we have to fight. “We’re not going to sit down and take it. Otherwise it doesn’t go away,” she said. “We won’t let them divide us. They don’t like that at all—they don’t like people coming together.”



Racism comes from the top of society

Azeem Rafiq (top)
Farzana Yousaf (middle)
Kausar Jan (above)

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings

PROTESTING IN London earlier this month for Uyghur freedom

China, the Uyghurs and the left

BRADFORD
Thu 2 Dec, 7pm
885-9187-7552

CARDIFF
Wed 1 Dec, 7.30pm
630-181-4857

MANCHESTER
Wed 8 Dec, 7.15pm
323-178-7151



The Socialist Workers Party continues to hold mostly online meetings during the pandemic. This ensures that there can still be collective and safe discussion, organising and actions. Occasionally branches will hold in-person meetings with precautions taken for a safe environment.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

BRIGHTON & HOVE
Climate change and migration—why we say 'open the borders'
Thu 9 Dec, 6.30pm
874-3262-3749

CAMBRIDGE
Capitalism, Covid and mental health
Thu 2 Dec, 7.30pm
681-800-4408

COVENTRY
After Sarah Everard—the police, violence, sexism and the state
Wed 1 Dec, 7.30pm
823-945-1917

CREWE & STOKE-ON-TRENT
Freedom of speech and the 'culture wars'
Wed 1 Dec, 7.30pm
838 816 0773

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH
After Texas—what now for abortion rights?
Wed 1 Dec, 7.30pm
894-2628-7708

EDINBURGH
Anger to revolution—why do people rise up?
Wed 1 Dec, 7.30pm
431-459-112

GLASGOW
Charities, Christmas and capitalism
Thu 2 Dec, 7pm
879-2402-3259

HASTINGS
The Nationality and Borders' bill—the case against immigration
Wed 1 Dec, 7.30pm
880-5464-3685

HOME COUNTIES
After the coup—resistance and revolution in Sudan
Thu 2 Dec, 6.30pm
992-204-9372

HUDDERSFIELD
Global catastrophe and the far right today
Wed 1 Dec, 6.30pm
290-168-1804

KENT
Islamophobia and racism—the politics of fear
Thu 2 Dec, 8.15pm
434-623-8064

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE
Breaking up the British state—Scotland, independence & socialism
Thu 2 Dec, 7pm
992-204-9372

LEEDS
Transgender resistance, socialism and the fight for trans liberation
Thu 2 Dec, 6pm
Hyde Park Book Club

LONDON: HACKNEY
Marxism, gender and trans liberation
Thu 2 Dec, 7.30pm
854-8245-8715
Old School Rooms, The Round Chapel, 2 Powerscroft Road, E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY
After the coup—resistance and revolution in Sudan
Wed 8 Dec, 7.30pm
459-388-1576

LONDON: ISLINGTON
Why we hate Mondays—Marxism and alienation
Thu 2 Dec, 7pm
459-388-1576

LONDON: NEWHAM
Covid, capitalism and disability
Wed 1 Dec, 7pm
288-098-8827

LONDON: SOUTH
Beyond our numbers—a socialist argument about population
Wed 1 Dec, 7pm
497-196-1801

LONDON: SOUTH EAST
Let's talk about sex—Marxism and sexual liberation
Thu 2 Dec, 7pm
529-913-6390

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS
Pride, politics & protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT+ liberation
Wed 1 Dec, 7.30pm
818-391-0420

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST
Booklaunch: Mindshift—how Culture Transformed the Human Brain
Wed 1 Dec, 7.30pm
543-023-057

LONDON: WEST AND NORTH WEST
Grenfell, the housing emergency and the climate crisis
Thu 2 Dec, 7.30pm
861-9481-1795

NEWCASTLE
Capitalism and slavery—the roots of racism
Wed 1 Dec, 7pm
368-595-2712

NORWICH
A revolutionary guide to trans liberation
Thurs 18 Nov, 7.30pm
906-652-5299

PORTSMOUTH
After the coup—resistance and revolution in Sudan
Wed 8 Dec, 7.30pm
488-934-2809

SWANSEA & WEST WALES
How do we fight for LGBT+ liberation?
Thu 2 Dec, 7pm
902-964-963
Brynmill Community Centre
St Albans Rd
SA2 0BP

WIGAN
Covid and the crisis in social care
Thu 2 Dec, 7pm
Relish, 43 Hallgate
WN1 1LR

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A relatable story of teenage life at the turn of the century

There's music and comedy in Reggie Yates's film *Pirates*—but it's the simple, well written story that makes it worth watching, writes **Harjeevan Gill**

PIRATES, DIRECTED by actor and DJ Reggie Yates in debut as a screenwriter, gives us a fun movie that touches on some issues many people will relate to.

It follows three young men on a journey across London, on New Year's Eve 1999, to have their best night out to see in the new millennium.

The film aims to tell the stories of Londoners that is not often shown in mainstream media.

It explores the issues that teenagers will often come across—major change, falling in love, and maintaining long standing relationships. But it could have done this in a little more depth.

Music is one of the main themes of the film. The title refers to pirate radio, and the film is full of musical references.

Yates's background in music shines through, as many of the scenes contain a musical element.

This ranges from the use of music from the late 90s and early 2000s to the characters singing their favourite songs in acapella.

There are a lot of jokes too, and the three main actors perform incredibly.

Elliot Edusah plays an emotionally conflicted role well.

Jordan Peters's facial expressions convey a lot. And Reda Elazouar carries the comedy in the film perfectly, with some standout delivery. Some of the jokes get repetitive, though—and that does let the film down.

Overall, *Pirates* is 80 minutes of relatable joy and is worth watching for that reason. The story is simple, yet well written. Yates's future work will be something to keep an eye on.

Pirates is in cinemas from Friday 26 November



ELLIOT EDUSAH, Reda Elazouar and Jordan Peters star in *Pirates*

Bong Joon-ho's Oscar winning masterpiece

FILM

PARASITE

On Channel 4 at 10pm, Saturday 27 November

THIS IS a chance to watch the story of class war that became the first non-English language movie to win best film at the Oscars.

This dark comedy film directed by Bong Joon-ho is about a poor family infiltrating a wealthy household. The

characters struggle daily to cope with economic inequality and poor living conditions.

It's success was because it highlights the appalling level of inequality in every society, which no one can turn away from.

It's a powerful, humorous film.

And it lets us touch, smell, and taste the details of lives of the people of a world of gross injustice and—particularly in 2019—also in forms of revolt.

New exhibition from leading figure in Black Arts movement

EXHIBITION

LUBAINA HIMID

At Tate Modern from Thursday 25 November. Book online at [Tate.org.uk](https://www.tate.org.uk)

LUBAINA HIMID'S powerful and poetic work has made her an increasingly influential figure. She played a pivotal role in the British Black Arts movement, and was the first black woman to win the Turner Prize.

This is Himid's largest solo exhibition to date, with new paintings and highlights from across her career.



'Between the Two my Heart is Balanced'

FILM

DYING TO DIVORCE

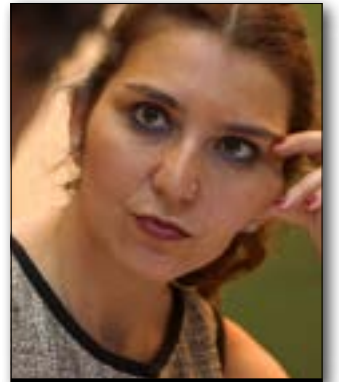
In cinemas now. Go to dyingtodivorce.com for listings

IN TURKEY, the number of femicides and domestic violence victims is rising and women are fighting back.

Dying to Divorce follows Ipek Bozkurt, a lawyer, who works with activists to get justice for survivors of assaults.

Ipek must fight not only against a legal system, which regularly gives light sentences to male perpetrators, but also an increasingly repressive government.

After an attempted coup, there is an unprecedented crackdown on dissenting



Ipek Bozkurt

voices leaving Ipek, like thousands of other lawyers, fearing imprisonment.

Filmed over five years, *Dying to Divorce* takes viewers into the heart of Turkey's gender-based violence crisis and political events that have severely eroded democratic freedoms.

The film has been entered to the Oscars for Best International Feature Film.

What's on at..

Bookmarks

The socialist bookshop

Toussaint Louverture & The Haitian Revolution

Christian Hogsberg and Margaret Renn discuss Paul Foot's talks on Louverture



Tuesday 7 December, 6:30pm. Book online at bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

Bookmarks Bookshop, London, WC1B 3QE

PEOPLE who are oppressed cannot project their liberation without taking time to reflect on their history.

Patrice Emery Lumumba, the first prime minister of the former Belgian colony of the Congo is one of the most iconic figures of the African anti-colonial struggles.

The legend of Lumumba was aptly captured on that dramatic independence day on 30 June 1960.

He took on the Belgian King Baudouin's praise of former ruler King Leopold's "civilizing mission" to the Congo.

From 1885 to 1908, Leopold's rule saw nine million Congolese killed. Thousands had hands chopped off by his military because they had failed to deliver the harsh quotas of rubber that the colonialists demanded.

This regime was supported by multinationals like UMHK, a consortium of Belgian and British mining interests and banks. And it was backed by the Catholic Church, which Leopold requested to facilitate colonialism by "disinterested our savages from the richness that is plenty in their underground, lest they one day dream to overthrow you."

But in response to Baudouin's acclaim for Leopold, incoming president Joseph Kasavubu, sheepishly thanked the King.

In an unscheduled speech, Lumumba indignantly rebuffed the Belgian narrative, saying independence was the crowning moment of heroic nationalist struggles from slavery. Lumumba was lauded globally. Malcolm X called him "the greatest living African."

FROM THAT moment Lumumba had crossed the imperialists' red line. In a rapid sequence of events, the West conspired with Congolese elites to depose and kill him.

Lumumba was born in 1925 to peasants in Kasai province. But his politics was shaped by his rise into the black middle class, the evolves. These included clerks, nurses and teachers.

The evolves mimicked European lifestyles and despised the "uncivilised" masses. Self-educated and later trained as a postal clerk, by 1955 Lumumba had joined the upper levels of evolve society.

His children attended white schools and he headed the evolve associations in Stanleyville and, later, the capital Leopoldville.

A follower of European Enlightenment radical intellectuals, Lumumba alongside others endorsed Belgian professor Anton Van Bilsen's call in 1956 for independence within 30 years.

In the 1950s the evolves



LUMUMBA & LIBERATION

African socialists Stanley Sithole, Narh Tei-Kumadroe, Naa Adjeley Laryea, Edmore Chinondidyachii Rujato and Munya Gwisai assess the life of Congo's Patrice Lumumba



King Baudouin

formed nationalist parties which were largely ethnic and regional.

The Alliance of the Kongo People (Akado), led by Kasavubu, championed Bakongo ethnic nationalism and immediate independence.

In Katanga the regionalist and anti-Communist Confederation of Katanga Associations (Conakata) was led by Moise Tshombe.

The Congolese National Movement (MNC) led by Lumumba called for a unitary state and independence "within a reasonable time."

After his 1957 release from prison for embezzlement at work, Lumumba was



The Belgians hoped to create a neo-colonial state with black allies in charge

immediate independence—led to tensions with most of the evolves. But they radicalised a small section of others, including Lumumba.

The evolves were attracted by a nationalist movement that could open the way for them to become leaders in a country free from the bondage of imperialism.

But they were also fearful of workers' struggles escalating into socialist revolution.

The turning point was the 4 January 1959 anti-European riots by 35,000 workers and unemployed in Leopoldville.

They were crushed by Belgian general Janssens' Force Publique with up to 500 people killed.

"Martyrs Day" was a massacre. But it marked the entrance of the working class as the decisive force in the anti-colonial struggles, shifting them in a revolutionary direction.

Riots and demonstrations spread nationwide.

TO pre-empt the rising wave of revolt, the panicked Belgians announced independence would be brought forward to 30 June 1960.

Lumumba's MNC won most seats in the pre-independence elections but without a majority. This resulted in a coalition government with Kasavubu as president and Lumumba as prime minister.

The Belgians' gamble was that they could create independence under a neo-colonial black elite—and that this group would protect their interests.

But the evolves were weak, divided and inexperienced—and they faced a militant working class.

Conflict erupted within days of independence. The masses expected serious improvements in their lives.

But on 5 July, Janssens told his soldiers near Leopoldville that there was not to be any real change. "Before Independence = After Independence," he wrote on a blackboard.

This sparked mutiny which spread nationwide into popular uprisings attacking whites, businesses and church property. Janssens demanded deployment of Belgian troops.

Lumumba made concessions to quieten the masses, replacing Janssens. He promoted black soldiers and replaced white commanders.

Now the Belgians manoeuvred with their local allies to destroy Lumumba. They first splintered the country.

Tshombe, supported by Belgium and UMHK, split off Katanga province. The United Nation's (UN) secretary general Dag Hammarskjöld, who Lumumba thought would support decolonisation, refused to intervene.

Instead UN troops protected the breakaway Katangan regime. Lumumba looked

around for fresh allies and moved towards Russia. That meant the Western imperialists redoubled their efforts to eliminate him.

Lumumba at times supported all out mobilisation for the popular uprisings. At other times he favoured a cautious approach based on personal charisma and appeals to African states, the UN the US and, later, Russia.

Increasingly the masses who had so scared the Belgians and could have remade Congo were reduced to spectators of a process at the top of society.

Kasavubu, dismissed Lumumba on 5 September. A US-backed coup soon followed led by Colonel Joseph Mobutu.

Lumumba escaped house arrest in December but was captured by Mobutu's forces assisted by the US and UN.

He was transferred to Katanga where Tshombe's soldiers under Belgian and US direction executed him and two of his comrades on 17 January 1961. His body was cut into pieces, dissolved in acid and a few teeth left as trophies.

THE MURDER of Lumumba sparked outrage and demonstrations in Yugoslavia, London and New York. The Congo Crisis followed, a proxy Cold War conflict and civil wars that left 100 000 dead.

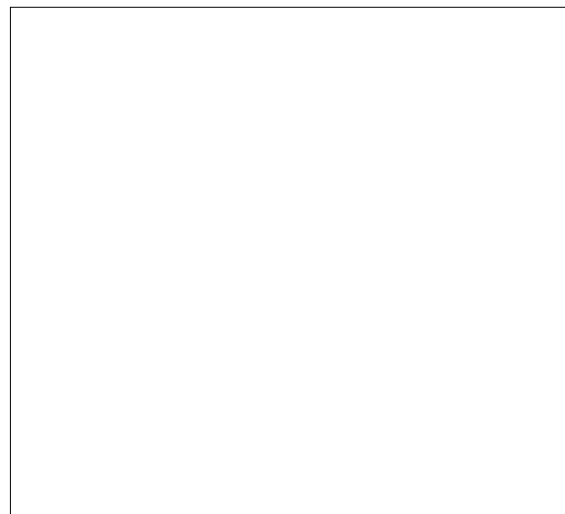
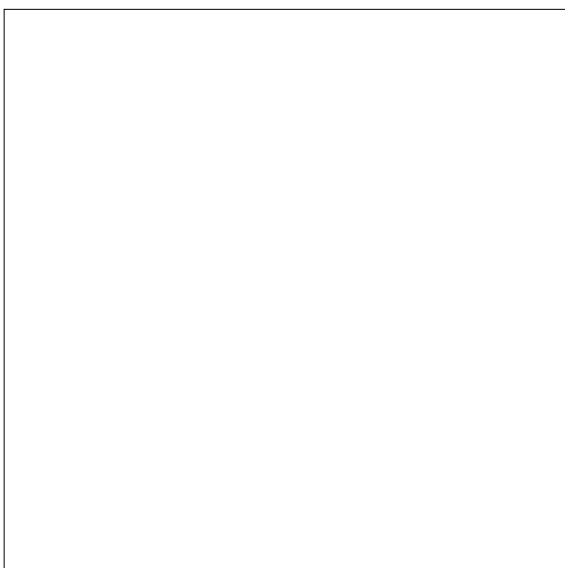
The 1964 Simba Rebellions by pro-Lumumbist forces and peasants declared a "communist" Peoples Republic of the Congo. They were supported by some African states and Cuba, which briefly sent Che Guevara to assist. But the People's Republic was crushed after US, Belgian and UN intervention.

Mobutu seized power in another US-backed coup in 1965. With US and Western support he set up, until 1997, one of the most pernicious and corrupt dictatorial regimes in Africa's history.

Lumumba's story is still relevant today. As the radical Belgian historian Ludo De Witte wrote, "This drama is much more than an old story, dead and gone."

"It is a staggering example of what the Western ruling classes are capable of when their vital interests are threatened. Assassination then becomes a useful measure."

"The murders of Lumumba, Rosa Luxemburg, Felix Moumie



PICTURE: GUY SHALMAN

Lumumba, here with British foreign minister John Profumo, hoped to win over the West (top) Moise Tshombe betrayed Lumumba and worked with imperialism (bottom)

and Malcolm X, as well as the massacres at Guernica, Buchenwald, Dresden, Hiroshima and My Lai, are the expressions of a system which turns men into beasts."

Lumumba was flawed, and his anti-colonial resistance could not finally be successful. But his bold, dying declaration is as true today as when it was uttered.

"The day will come when history will speak. But it will not be the history which will be taught in Brussels, Paris, Washington, or the United Nations."

"It will be history which will be taught in our countries which have won freedom from colonialism and its puppets. Africa will write its own history and it will be a story of glory and dignity."

This is the first in an occasional series of articles by African socialists about the history of Africa and revolutionary politics

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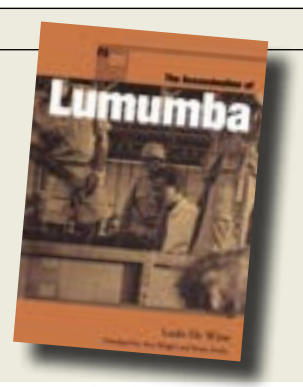
● **Lumumba: Africa's Lost Leader** by Leo Zellig £12

● **King Leopold's Ghost** by Adam Hochschild £10.99

● **The Assassination of Lumumba** by Ludo De Witte £16.99

● **Dark heart of imperialism** by Charlie Kimber available at bit.ly/LumumbaCK

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to www.bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



Remember Anwar Ditta and her fight against the Home Office

Anwar Ditta, a heroic anti-racist campaigner, died last week. Yuri Prasad remembers her most crucial battle



ANWAR DITTA with her daughter Samera Shuja when they were reunited

PICTURE: JOHN STURROCK

The Anwar Ditta Defence Campaign that formed around her in 1979 made a crucial impact, says Bunday.

It organised large demonstrations, produced leaflets and organised meetings all over the country.

It was this campaign that brought Ditta's fight to the attention of editors at Granada TV's World in Action programme.

The resulting documentary, These Children Are Mine, was shown on prime-time ITV in 1981.

The team produced sworn witness statements, marriage certificates and identity cards to prove that Ditta had lived and married in Pakistan. These were crucial facts officials disputed.

It even arranged for blood samples of the children and the parents to be compared—at that time still a relatively new procedure—by specialists at the London Hospital.

The results smashed the Home Office's theory that the children belonged to someone other than Ditta.

“The system was designed to demoralise, but it hadn't reckoned on Ditta

Despite officials having declared the case "closed", after the programme aired the Home Office was shamed into allowing the Ditta family to be reunited.

Mark Krantz, then a student teacher in Rochdale, visited Ditta at home shortly afterwards.

"I'd read about the case in Socialist Worker," he said. "So I made a card to congratulate Anwar and took it around the staff room to get it signed."

"During my lunch hour, I went round to her house. Like so many of our pupils' families, she lived in a desperately poor area. I sat in her front room chatting surrounded by piles of linen."

Sewing

Ditta was by then working at home sewing pillowcases for the NHS. "The Home Office has ruined our lives so far."

"For six years I've been apart from my children," she told Socialist Worker after her victory.

But Ditta said the support for her campaign continued to be amazing.

"When I go out shopping it takes me three hours to do what I used to do in one! People I've never seen before keep coming up and wishing me a happy life."

With justification Ditta could have chosen to step back after the victory. Instead, she dedicated herself to fight for "other people in my position".

Watch World in Action's These Children Are Mine at bit.ly/AnwarDitta

Less than a six percent rise means a pay cut

THE COST of living has risen at the fastest rate in ten years, forcing millions of people into financial hardship.

Inflation hit six percent in October, up from 4.9 percent in September, reported the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The increase is mostly due to rising energy and fuel prices. Gas and electric prices increased 28.1 percent and 18.8 percent respectively in a year.

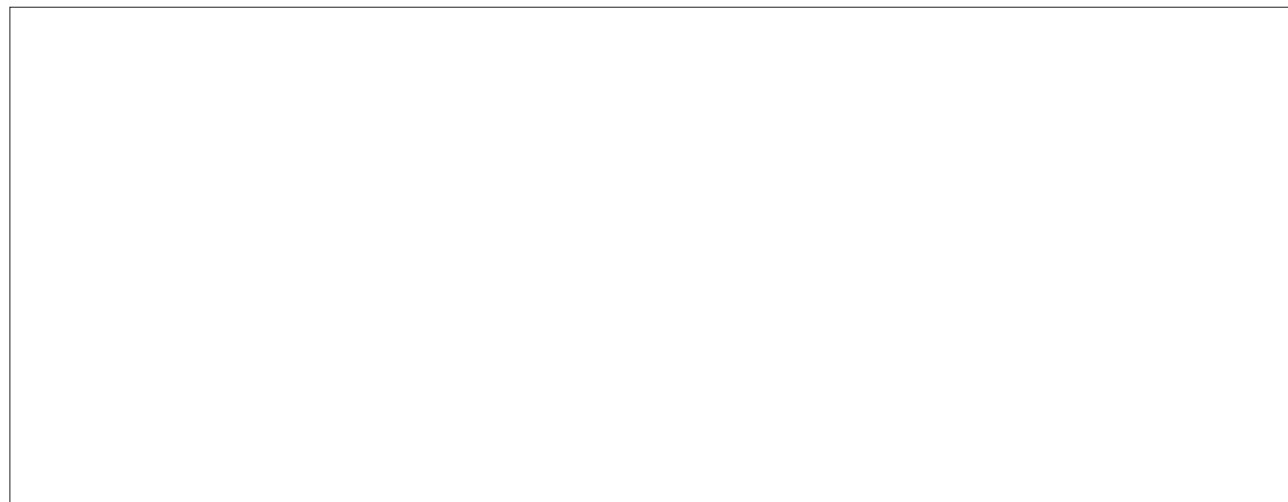
Transport, housing, restaurants and hotels, household goods, food and non-alcoholic beverages are also big contributors to the rise.

The ONS and Bank of England prefer to use the inaccurate, lower Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation which excludes housing related costs. CPI currently sits at 4.2 percent.

The Bank of England has predicted that this situation will get much worse.

They claim CPI could rise to 4.5 percent this month and five percent by April, next year.

We are now in a new era where not just the very poorest will be hit, but a



ARRIVA SOUTH Wales bus drivers on the picket lines

majority of workers will be faced with financial setbacks.

This means when workers organise and fight for pay, they have to recognise what a six percent inflation rate means.

Workers may believe winning a pay rise below six percent is a victory. A couple of years ago it might have been.

But as General Secretary of Unite, Sharon Graham warned, workers will face

a “calamitous drop in their standard of living”, unless wages “match the inflation rate”.

Some lorry drivers have received 20 percent pay rises recently, showing the possibilities.

And there are more lorry disputes brewing at Tesco, Morrisons and DHL.

But more consistently, workers are handed low offers, which are often hailed as a victory by union leaders

It was reassuring to see Arriva London South bus drivers in Unite recently refuse their pay offer of 1.5 percent, citing inflation as a major reason.

But now the union mustn’t compromise for say two or three percent.

There needs to be a fundamental shift in pay battles, and there is a lot of ground to catch up.

On average real pay is less than £2 a week above

the pre-2008 financial crisis peak. And many workers are still below that level.

A review of Britain’s biggest private and public employers discovered that pay had only increased two percent a year in the three months before the end of October.

Despite the rapid inflation rise, the consultancy responsible for the investigation, XpertHR said, “The data shows that pay awards are at the same level as this time last

year and confirms a period of stability.”

The Tories are willing to ignore pay demands from workers and instead continue with more attacks.

Already this year workers have suffered the end of the furlough programme, the scrapping of the £20 Universal Credit uplift and the toxic system of fire and rehire.

Now workers suffer rising prices including petrol which rose 25.4p a litre in a month and has continued to climb to 144.3p a litre on average.

The only way to reverse this and ensure workers aren’t made to pay for the Tories’ Covid pandemic failures is to organise in workplaces and fight back.

Graham said, “The rise in inflation reflects a growing crisis in the cost of living for ordinary families.”

But warm words are not enough, especially from unions, including Unite, who have often claimed that below inflation wage rises are a win.

Workers on the ground must push hard for a pay rise above inflation, and any offer below six percent should be considered a pay cut.

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Universities fight is on— make sure strikes hit hard

Major battles are set to burst out onto the picket lines across Britain next week—and education workers have shown they're serious and determined

THOUSANDS OF workers at 58 universities across Britain are to strike for three days from Wednesday to Friday of next week. It's an important battle that needs full support and solidarity.

The scale and content of the action were made possible only by a rank and file revolt against the UCU union's leaders. This has to go much further.

Workers are battling in two linked disputes. One is against huge cuts of 35 percent to guaranteed pensions. These are based on outlandishly pessimistic figures about future funding for the scheme.

Even the Financial Times newspaper's impeccably mainstream chief economics commentator Martin Wolf backs the workers' case.

He says workers are "the victims of unduly risk-averse decision making at the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), under the influence of misconceived regulation".

Wolf adds, "The USS is a large funded scheme, with 476,000 members and £82.2 billion in assets. Universities are also more or less immortal institutions. If they cannot afford the benefits promised in their scheme, nobody can, apart perhaps from the government."

Dispute

The other dispute is over what's known as the "four fights". These are for better pay, reduced workload, opposition to casualisation, and closing the disability, gender and ethnic pay gaps.

Pay has fallen by 20 percent in real terms after 12 years of below-inflation pay offers. A third of academic staff are on insecure contracts and the gender pay gap is 15 percent. Each



WORKERS ARE fighting over pensions, conditions, workload, casualisation and pay equality

university's strike vote was counted separately. Those who did not reach the turnout threshold laid down in the anti-union laws will be reballoted so they have a chance to join the next round of strikes in 2022.

When the strike votes were first announced, UCU union general secretary Jo Grady put forward a wholly inadequate response.

She proposed that there be just one day of strike over each dispute before Christmas. This was token action and would also have acted to separate—and potentially to divide—the two.

Ordinary UCU members reacted angrily. Representatives to Branch

Delegate earlier this month overwhelmingly rejected Grady's plan. Subsequently, the union's higher education committee (HEC) had to come up with a revised plan.

The UCU Left organisation, which Socialist Worker supports, said the HEC "had to respond to a wholesale rejection of the proposals set out by the general secretary".

"It heard the opposition to de-coupling the disputes expressed by branches," it said.

And UCU Left added that now the strike days "will be joint strikes for both disputes". "This is the only way to unite pre-92 with post-92 branches,

and branches with a mandate in one dispute with those with a mandate in the other."

It's good there are more strikes and united strikes. But the union leaders' new strategy is only the barest reflection of the mood to fight.

They should have called at least five days of strikes before Christmas.

And it's not clear from the UCU statement when the reballots will take place.

Grady speaks ominously of branches that win a mandate in reballots being able to join the action "in the spring". That seems very late if there are to be speedy reballots.

Reballots must start as soon as the strike begins

SAIRA WEINER is UCU branch secretary at Liverpool John Moores University where workers voted 74 percent for strikes but fell just short of the turnout threshold.

She told Socialist Worker, "We want the reballots to start on the first day of the strikes, 1 December, to build on that momentum."

"There's a real feeling that people want to be part of the action as soon as possible, and that means rebalotting quickly.

"On 1 December we will be encouraging our members to join in collective solidarity visits to picket lines near us.

"Our turnout this time was the highest we have ever achieved in a postal ballot.

"We can get over 50 percent next time.

"We have been strengthening the branch and we now have more activists and we know the areas we have to target and improve.

"People are desperate

to take action, particularly over workload and the gender pay gap, which is worsening."

UCU members have to make sure the December strikes are a big success.

There need to be big pickets and a real attempt to close down the universities that have been called out.

Those that have not yet won a ballot should visit local striking ones to show support.

And other trade unionists should also

go to picket lines. The NUS students' union says it backs the strikes. Its national president, Larissa Kennedy, said, "Students have a rich history of standing shoulder to shoulder with university staff, who have seen their pensions, pay and conditions slashed in recent years.

"With vice chancellors' average total pay packets rising to £269,000 per year, it's clear employers can afford to resolve their dispute.

"The onus for minimising disruption for students lies with university bosses."

Students should mobilise for the pickets alongside the striking workers.

And a key task for UCU members is to build the rank and file networks that can shape the dispute and press for urgently-needed escalation.

If it is left to the foot-dragging union leaders the dispute will be taken to a dead end.

Where will the strikes happen?

HERE ARE the universities that will strike next week.

- Aston University
- Birkbeck, University of London
- Courtauld Institute of Art
- Durham University
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Glasgow School of Art
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- Greenwich University
- Heriot-Watt University
- Imperial College London
- Institute of Development Studies
- Keele University
- King's College London
- Kingston University
- Liverpool Hope University
- London School of Economics
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Loughborough University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Open University
- Queen Margaret University
- Queens University Belfast
- Roehampton University
- Royal College of Art
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- Royal Northern College of Music
- SOAS, University of London
- Sheffield Hallam University
- The University of Birmingham
- The University of Dundee
- The University of Kent
- The University of Leeds
- The University of Manchester
- The University of Northampton
- The University of Nottingham
- The University of Salford
- The University of Sheffield
- The University of Stirling
- University College London
- University of Bath
- University of Bradford
- University of Brighton
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Chester
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Essex
- University of Glasgow
- University of Lancaster
- University of Leicester
- University of Liverpool
- University of Reading
- University of St Andrews
- University of Sussex
- University of Ulster
- University of York
- University of the Arts London

This list is adapted from bit.ly/UCUstrikes1221

TRANSPORT

BUSES

Oldham workers vote over pay

BUS WORKERS employed by First Manchester are preparing to ballot over pay and conditions. The drivers are also voting over shift patterns and rotas.

Workers agreed to emergency procedures that were introduced at the start of the pandemic. But they now want a return to previous arrangements as passenger numbers increase.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said, “Our members at First Manchester are not going to accept low pay and poor conditions any longer.”

The Unite union is balloting 350 members for strikes that could begin in early January. The ballot is set to end on Thursday 23 December.

First Manchester operates from a depot in Oldham but strikes will affect services stretching beyond Greater Manchester.

The hourly pay for a highly skilled bus driver is just £12.40 an hour. Workers must refuse any pay offers below inflation and be prepared to fight for a significant rise.

Attack on shifts in London

OVER 950 bus drivers at Abellio in south and west London are being balloted for industrial action in a dispute over shifts.

The company’s scheduling agreement establishes a driver’s shift pattern for a year. Under the existing agreement the Unite union elects scheduling reps who are fully consulted.

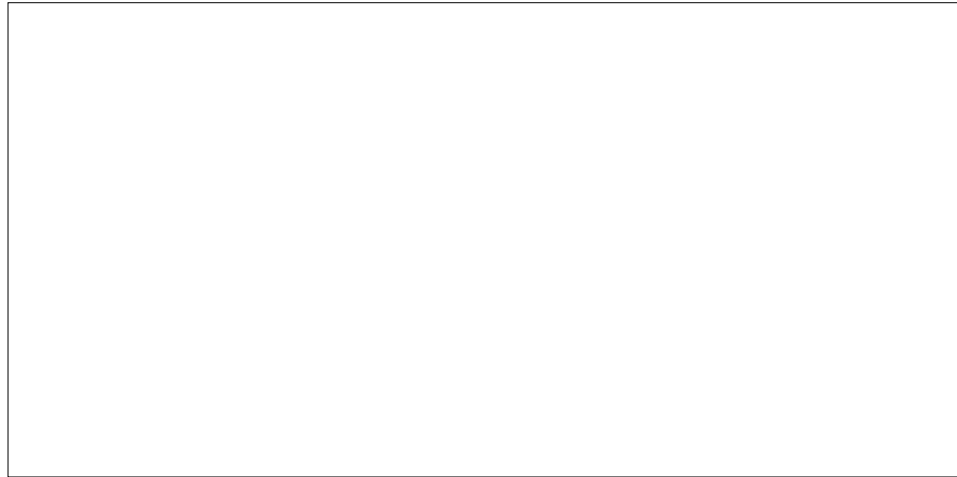
Now Abellio has brought its scheduling system in-house and hasn’t consulted reps on changes taking place.

Drivers now face life-changing alterations to schedules.

One worker for example, has worked mornings for a decade. They’ll now work permanent late duties and nights.

The dispute affects both the company’s subsidiaries Abellio London Ltd and Abellio West London Ltd. Action could hit six depots—Battersea, Beddington, Hayes, Southall, Twickenham and Walworth.

Unite regional officer Guy Langston said, “Workers are having their lives turned upside down and are being given shift patterns which will simply make them ill.”



NIGHT TUBE workers are set to take to the picket lines

Workers fight across London transport

by SAM ORD

WORKERS WERE set to strike on the London Underground network this week over the forced reintroduction of the Night Tube.

The RMT union claims the reintroduction will impose “impossible and unreasonable demands on staff”.

Workers say reopening can’t come at the expense of ruining workers’ social life work life balance.

Bosses also want to axe jobs across the network.

Workers on Night Tube lines were set to walk out for 24 hours from 4.30am on Friday of this week and again on Saturday 18 December.

On top of that, workers on the Central and Victoria lines are set to strike from 8.30pm on Saturday of next week to 4.30am Sunday of next week.

They plan further strikes on Saturday and Sunday of next week, and on 11, 12 and 18 December.

RMT general secretary, Mick Lynch said, “RMT supports the reintroduction

of the Night Tube but we know full well that prior to its suspension during the pandemic it was a magnet for violent, abusive and anti-social behaviour.

“We warned months ago that slashing 200 Night Tube Train Driver positions would create a staffing nightmare and London Underground need to start facing up to that reality.”

●WOOLWICH FERRY workers in east London are set to return to picket lines after a month of negotiations fell flat.

Workers are fighting the victimisation of two union reps, and the excessive use of agency staff.

They also demand a new pay and reward scheme, and improved health and safety training for new employees.

The workers and their union, Unite, hoped conditions would improve after Transport for London (TfL) took over operations from Briggs Marine Contractors Ltd last year.

But workers have branded TfL’s leadership “a year of misrule”. The 58 workers have

already struck for 30 days this year.

They have once more voted to strike with a 90 percent majority.

Strike dates—which hadn’t been released as Socialist Worker went to press—hope to cause travel disruption over Christmas and New Year.

●TRANSPORT workers in London are set to protest outside parliament on Wednesday of next week, against attacks on pay freezes, cuts and attacks on pensions.

Workers are under attack thanks to conditions the Tory government placed on Transport for London in return for a bailout.

The protest is called by five transport unions and the TUC union federation.

They demand the government stops its attacks on transport workers and restores operating grants to TfL.

●Assemble 11am, Wednesday 1 December, Old Palace Yard, SW1P 3JY.

●Sign the petition in support of TfL workers bit.ly/3DIQGs0

EDUCATION

Goldsmiths workers want to stop all redundancies

WORKERS AT Goldsmiths university in south London began a bold 15 days of strikes on Tuesday of this week.

They were set to begin their strike with a rally outside the university as Socialist Worker went to press.

University bosses want to sack 20 academics

from the English, Creative Writing and History department, along with 32 professional service staff.

Strikers—members of the UCU union—say they won’t stop fighting until all redundancies have been cancelled.

This round of strikes is set to end on Monday 13 December.

PENSIONS

Strike at boarding school after bosses ignore union

TEACHERS AT St Francis’ College boarding school in Letchworth struck last week in a battle over pensions.

Workers walked out for three days last week and were set to strike again on Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

NEU union members oppose the school governing body’s proposal to leave the Teachers’ Pension Scheme. School

governors launched a consultation in September, but refused to negotiate with the union.

In a letter to parents the NEU said, “The governors propose to make a significant cut to teachers’ pensions. This comes on top of the gradual erosion of members’ standard of living, brought about by years of pay freezes and below-inflation pay rises.”

ACADEMISATION

Primary teachers in bid to stop academy conversion

TEACHERS AND support staff at St Matthew’s primary school in Preston are set to strike in December over plans to acadmise the school. Workers plan

walkouts on 9, 14, 15, and 16 December, and two more next year. The NEU union says the academisation threatens workers’ terms and conditions.

VICTIMISATION



The rally for John

PICTURE: DAVID SMITH

SOME 100 people rallied in support of victimised NEU rep, John Boken in Shrewsbury on Saturday.

John was sacked in September after taking a stand against racism in the workplace.

As management targeted John, NEU members at Shrewsbury Colleges Group took to picket lines across all three campuses.

Union members saw the attacks on John as part of a wider attack on organising throughout the Covid pandemic.

John told Socialist Worker, “It was an amazing

rally—seeing different organisations and unions coming together, standing shoulder to shoulder with me.”

North Staffordshire Against Racism and Fascism and Stand Up To Racism supported the rally, as did NEU branches from around England.

John is immensely grateful for the support and organisation of the regional NEU and his wife.

He added, “I hope that management will do the right thing and reinstate myself so we can move forward.”

RAIL

Train workers in the East Midlands and Scotland strike over unsafe conditions

TRAIN MANAGERS and Senior Conductors on East Midlands Railway are set to strike again in separate battles for safety, pay and conditions.

Workers’ return to action comes after their union, RMT, suspended strikes for weeks of negotiations that ended in failure.

Train managers are fighting against unsafe new working arrangements on 12-carriage trains.

Senior conductors are fighting over pay, conditions and contract issues.

Workers must now consider more disruptive actions to force the hands of the bosses.

●PICKET LINES hit key locations on the Caledonian Sleeper route as staff struck again for pay and workplace justice.

RMT general secretary, Mick Lynch accused the operating company, Serco and their “political paymasters in the Scottish Government” of “leaving sleeper staff out in the cold”.

Workers’ action has involved halting services back to London from the Cop26 climate conference in Glasgow.

The workers are right to highlight how public transport is vital in fighting for climate justice—and winning means finding ways to hit the Scottish government and Serco hard.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Build pay strike vote in councils & schools

by NICK CLARK

SOME 375,000 council and school workers across England and Wales are set to begin voting on whether to strike over pay.

Members of the Unison union are gearing up for a major battle after council bosses offered them a pay increase that's well below inflation—effectively a pay cut.

It comes after more than a decade of similar pay cuts and freezes that have left low-paid council workers struggling.

John McLoughlin, Unison branch secretary at Tower Hamlets council in east London, told Socialist Worker, "We've already had our pay cut 25 percent over the past ten years.

"People are feeling the pressure—not just with the increase in inflation, but in core needs such as energy."

Bosses at the Local Government Association—the umbrella organisation of councils in England and Wales—offered a 1.75 percent increase, or 2.75 percent for the lowest paid, in 2021.

But the RPI rate of inflation

WORKERS WANT to bin low pay

is currently 6 percent. And, as Unison points out, the price of some essentials, has risen even more.

It adds that the value of local government pay is a quarter lower than a decade ago.

"That means, in effect, local government workers work at least a day a week for free, compared to 2010."

Unison, the GMB and Unite

are calling for a 10 percent rise.

Workers already rejected the offer by 79 percent in a consultative ballot earlier this year.

Now, John says the task is to make sure enough people vote to beat the 50 percent turnout threshold demanded by Tory anti-union laws.

"The key thing is to involve as many people as possible in

building a big turnout," he said.

"Have big rallies to launch it. Get people to do what they can, whether that's phone banking or just talking to their workmates.

"One of the most effective things is when people get their ballot paper, they talk about it to others—whether that's physically in the workplace or in an online Teams meeting."

John pointed out that many council and school workers aren't working from home—meaning activists can leaflet workplaces and organise meetings.

Manual

"School workers are in, all manual workers are in," he said. "Plus there are jobs such as social workers.

"In schools, you've got the staff room and a possibility of holding a meetings. In other places such as bin depots there are places where people gather for their lunchbreaks."

The ballot is set to begin on Wednesday of next week and end on Friday 14 January

The GMB is holding a consultative strike ballot that closes on 13 December.

GLASGOW

The cleansing workers in Glasgow want more strikes

CLEANSING WORKERS in Glasgow could head back to picket lines in December.

The members of the GMB union took eight days of strikes as the Cop26 climate conference went on earlier this month.

The leader of the Glasgow City Council (GCC) Susan Aitken said she would review pay rates for workers on the lowest pay grades—who earn less than £20,000 a year.

Aitken also said the council would look into improving working conditions which were such a big part of why cleansing workers were pushed to strike.

But the council rejected a call by the GMB for a "Glasgow Payment" which would give a lump sum to the lowest paid council workers.

The GMB sent out two consultative ballots to members last week. The results showed that three-quarters of GMB members were unhappy with what GCC has proposed.

And in addition four-fifths were willing to strike again.

The union has also said that a large number of its members who work for GCC in education, social work and care homes would also be prepared to take industrial action.

Cleansing workers have consistently pushed for more strikes and action, even when their union wasn't always completely behind them.

Only more strikes will force GCC to make the desperately needed changes that the Glasgow cleansing workers deserve.

WATER POLLUTION



AROUND 100 protesters marched along the River Severn in Shrewsbury last Saturday to protest against the continuing dumping of raw sewage into the river

PICTURE: DAVID SMITH

CARE HOME WORKERS

Big victory over pay after strikes at Sage care home

WORKERS AT the Sage care home in north London have won a pay rise after striking and waging a high profile campaign for more than a year.

The members of the UVW union, who work in care, domestic and maintenance will now earn the London living wage. This means their pay will rise by 11 percent.

The dispute began in March 2020.

During the height of the Covid pandemic, workers were forced to make their own PPE.

This is a victory for a group of mainly immigrant and black and Asian workers, but they know that the fight is not over.

One of strikers' main concerns, when Socialist Worker spoke to them on picket lines, was understaffing and

Workers fought bravely

conditions. Workers must continue to fight for these issues.

After the pay rise was announced care worker Julia said, "We held picket lines, distributed thousands of leaflets to the local community. Some 70,000 people signed our petitions. Members of Parliament signed an early day motion. We delivered this win, but the battle is not over."

DHL

Now unite the fights at DHL

AROUND 90 DHL drivers and warehouse workers based in Bellshill near Glasgow are set to strike over pay and working conditions.

Unite union members rejected an initial offer of 9 percent over two years because it did nothing to tackle low pay.

The majority of workers are on £12.50 an hour.

Workers also threw out a slightly improved offer.

They voted 88 percent to reject on a 95 percent turnout.

Meanwhile around 140 DHL lorry drivers who deliver for Sainsbury's across the south west of England could strike over pay.

Drivers have been offered a 3 percent increase over an 18 month period.

Ballots were set to close this week.

If the workers vote for strikes action could begin as early as the second week of December, causing considerable disruption to Christmas supplies.

MANUFACTURING

Pay cut pong at scent firm

WORKERS AT International Flavours & Fragrances (IFF) in Haverhill, Suffolk as workers are voting on strikes over pay for the first time in a quarter of a century.

Bosses offered the 100 workers in the Unite union at the Duddery Hill site just a 1.8 percent rise.

In February this year, IFF became part of the DuPont empire.

Unite regional officer Roger Dillon said, "Industrial relations at this firm dedicated to producing lovely tastes and smells, quite frankly, give off a bad odour."

The ballot runs until 11 December.

WORKERS IN the Unite union at dumper truck maker Thwaites in Leamington Spa are voting on whether to strike over pay.

Bosses have offered a below-inflation 3 percent rise for this year.

ROUND-UP

WORKERS AT hospitals in Berkshire are preparing for strikes after a reorganisation that will leave them worse off.

Five days of action are set to hit four hospitals next week.

Bosses of NHS Property Services want to change job specifications and weaken links to NHS rates of pay.

The workers involved are in housekeeping, cleaning, catering and car parking services that have all recently been privatised.

Strikes are set to take place at the King Edward VII hospital in Windsor, Wokingham hospital, Upton hospital in Slough and St Marks hospital in Maidenhead.

GMB organiser Asia Allison, said the workers "feel abandoned by the Trust".

"Now they face having their NHS terms and conditions changed by NHS Property services."

WORKERS AT Panasonic at Pontprennau, Cardiff, began strikes on Tuesday this week over pay. The members of the GMB union

are also due to strike on the next two Tuesdays.

The dispute arose after the company failed to offer a substantial pay increase for 2021, after workers accepted a pay freeze last year during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Workers overwhelmingly rejected the company's initial 1 percent offer.

AROUND 300 workers at Ponticelli UK Ltd and Semco Maritime Ltd have voted in favour of strikes over cuts to terms and conditions.

The Unite union's Ponticelli UK Ltd members voted to strike action by 94 percent. Those at Semco Maritime Ltd backed action by 90 percent.

These workers are on the Total Energies contract in the North Sea.

Unite regional officer, John Boland said, "Unite members are beyond angry and frustrated.

"We now see that Unite was right when we raised concerns about these two companies.

"The only way our members can stop these attacks is to fight them."

SUDANESE ARMY TRIES TO TRICK REVOLUTION

by CHARLIE KIMBER

THE SUDANESE revolt against the military coup faces a severe test.

Abdalla Hamdok, the ousted civilian prime minister, has done a deal with General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan to lead a government of technocrats for a transitional period.

Most of the anti-coup opposition quickly denounced the move as a sham designed to give the appearance of change while the military effectively stay in charge.

After the deal was announced tens of thousands of people went ahead with demonstrations. Protesters chanted, “Hamdok has sold the revolution.”

The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), a leading protest group of teachers, lecturers, doctors, engineers and lawyers, called the deal “treacherous”.

The Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), the coalition that shared power with the military before the coup, said the deal was a betrayal.

“We affirm our clear and previously announced position—no negotiation and no partnership and no legitimacy for the putschists,” said the alliance in a statement.

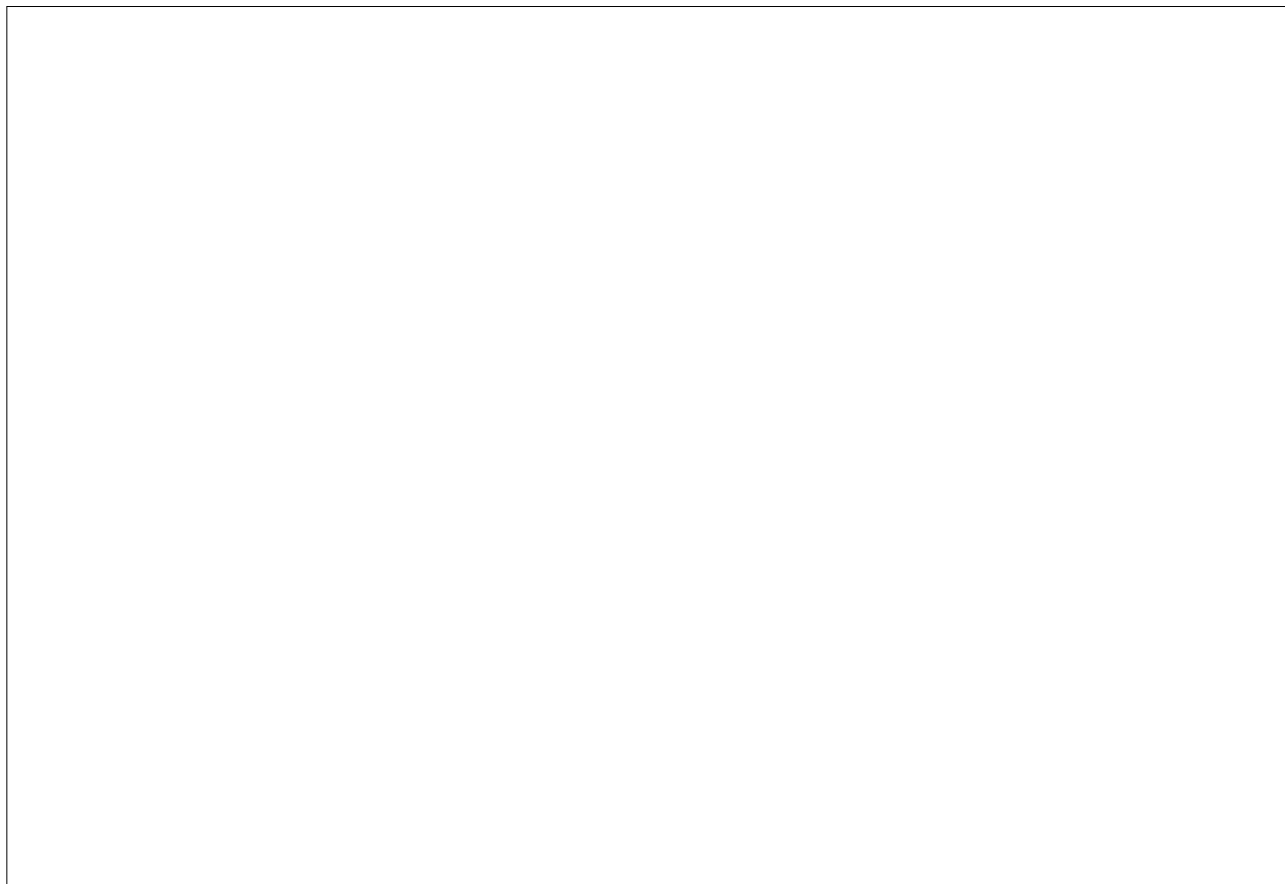
Rejecting

The Hamdok-al Burham deal is an attempt to end the revolution, not complete it.

That’s why the United States, Britain and the European Union welcomed it. Their opposition to the coup was only ever because it might lead to growing protests and strikes in Sudan and wider in the region.

The generals blocked the transition to a civilian government in October because they did not want any reduction in their wealth and power. They also sought to avoid accountability for their crimes against protesters in 2019 and their massacres for years in Darfur.

They will not stand aside unless they think they can run the government in



ANTI-COUP PROTESTERS in Khartoum last week after the ‘deal’ was announced

London solidarity protesters say don’t trust deal—or world leaders behind it

AROUND 300 people gathered outside the Sudanese embassy in London on Saturday to protest against the coup.

Many had marched there from the BBC headquarters where they demanded coverage of the resistance’s message.

Moussa told Socialist Worker, “We want to see democracy and civilian rule. We are committed to the road of non-violence and I am sure we will be victorious in the end.”

But other protesters wanted a new strategy. Shadda said, “The military has the money

and the guns. I do not really believe the international community will deliver the pressure to remove the generals.

They might not like them, but they might not really stop them.”

Higher That’s right. The Sudanese revolution has shown extraordinary courage and defiance, but it must now move to higher forms of resistance.

This requires a battle with all the sell-outs who want compromise with the military.



Protesters in London last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

the background, whatever the outward appearance. Protests and strikes must be stepped up, not halted.

Al-Burhan and his co-conspirators such as the killer Mohamed “Hemetti” Hamdan Dagalo should be in jail, not making cosy deals.

Who will pay for the deaths and torture of protesters since 25 October? Where are the plans to transfer all the military’s wealth to Sudanese workers and the poor?

The true face of the military was unveiled on Sunday when soldiers shot dead a 16 year old protester in Omdurman.

This takes the number of people killed since the coup to over 40.

Resistance

Protests on Wednesday of last week led to the deadliest repression so far, with the toll of those killed on that one day standing at 16.

The military killed 11 in Khartoum Bahri district, the centre of the neighbourhood resistance committees. Maab Salah, a member of the local resistance committee, said, “Almost every neighbourhood in Bahri today has a funeral.

“What we saw yesterday was something new. Police forces from different units all took part in the repression and killing yesterday. I even saw the traffic police firing on the protesters.”

It’s hugely important that most of the opposition has rejected the deal.

Now there are two key measures the anti-coup forces have to take.

The first is to keep up the demonstrations and to organise a general strike to paralyse the economy and reveal the narrow base of the new regime.

The second is to argue for a state—in opposition to the Hamdok-military government—based on the neighbourhood resistance committees and the workers’ organisations

Sudanese activists everywhere are debating how to move forward.